

The Atlantic

WOMEN IN POLITICS / CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN ON SOUTH AFRICA

THE DAWN OF THE SUBURBAN ERA IN AMERICAN POLITICS

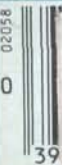


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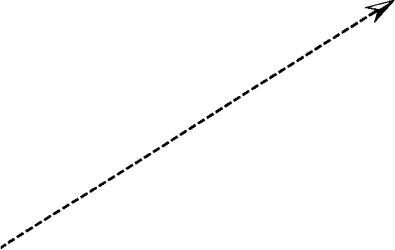
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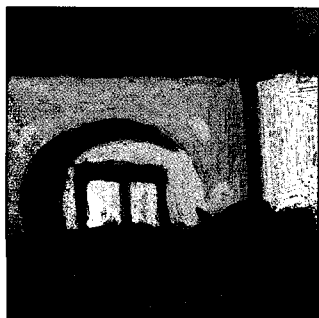
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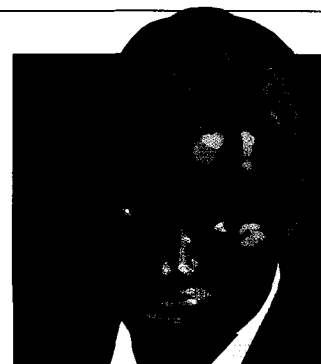




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Nearly half the U.S. population now lives in suburbs. "That explains the obsessive focus on the middle class in the 1992 campaign," the author writes. Suburbanites are anti-tax and anti-government. They want a secure and controlled environment. And they are up for grabs.

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Six years ago in these pages Conor Cruise O'Brien wrote of South Africa: "The maintenance of the status quo is impossible. Reforms acceptable both to the white electorate and to politicized blacks are impossible. Revolution is impossible." The authors report on a recent visit to South Africa.

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Nat King Cole's hiply confiding tone, with a jazz musician's timing wedded to his own insouciance, set a fresh standard for pop singing. New CDs show that for much of his career Cole also led one of the most supple small bands in jazz.

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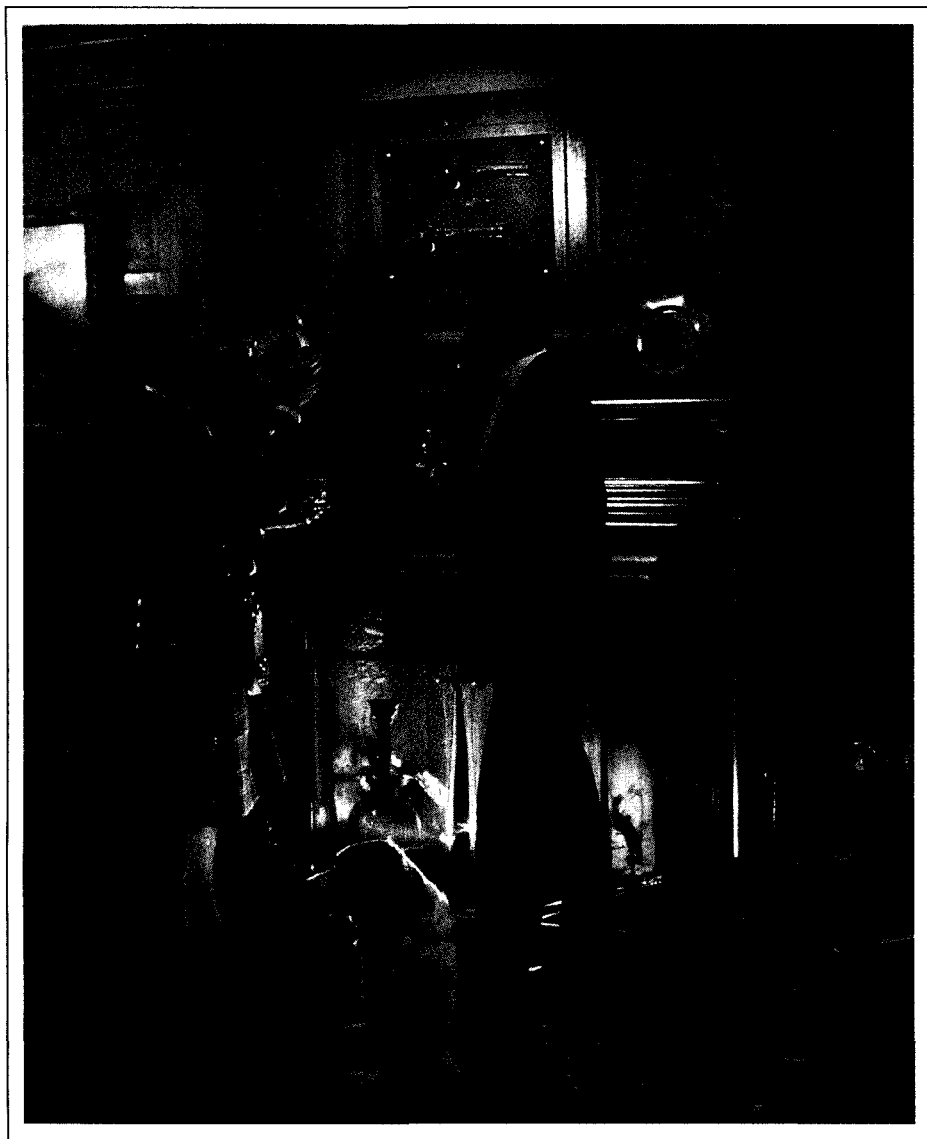
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Sandy Milne holding forth on the pistols.

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CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN, who with his son Patrick wrote the article on South Africa in this issue, is no stranger to intractable political conflict. He is, after all, Irish. Equally to the point, he was for many years a diplomat, in the service first of his native country and then of the United Nations, and has seen firsthand what human populations are capable of when divided by race, religion, or ideology.

O'Brien is that rare combination: a literary man who is also a man of affairs—a "public intellectual" of the sort that has almost disappeared from American and British letters. Born in Dublin in 1917, O'Brien received both a bachelor's degree and a doctorate from Trinity College. He eventually joined the Republic of Ireland's Department of External Affairs, and after a posting in France became, in 1956, a member of the Irish delegation to the United Nations.

In 1961 O'Brien was chosen by Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN Secretary-General, to serve on his executive staff. He represented the United Nations as its troops sought to bring to an end a civil war in the Congo caused by the attempt of the province of Katanga to secede. O'Brien's controversial

tenure in the Congo, which was made all the more difficult by Hammarskjöld's death in a plane crash in Northern Rhodesia, is recounted in his book *To Katanga and Back* (1963).

Upon his resignation from the diplomatic service O'Brien became a writer and educator. It was not, for him, a completely untrodden path: he had already published a collection of essays about modern Catholic writers and a study of the Irish nationalist Charles Stewart Parnell. During the past three decades O'Brien has published a dozen books, many of them, including *Passion & Cunning: Essays on Nationalism, Terrorism and Revolution* (1988) and *The Siege: The Saga of Israel and Zionism* (1986), dealing with regional hostilities. O'Brien has reported for *The Atlantic* not only from South Africa but also from Israel, India, and Nicaragua.

On a trip to South Africa in 1986 O'Brien was for the first time accompanied by his adopted son, Patrick, a free-lance writer who is now also on the staff of the European Community Commission, in Brussels. The O'Briens have collaborated on several articles about South Africa. The one in this issue is a result of their most recent visit.

—THE EDITORS



Patrick and Conor Cruise O'Brien

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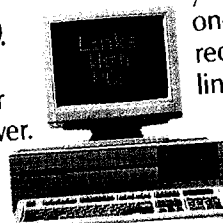
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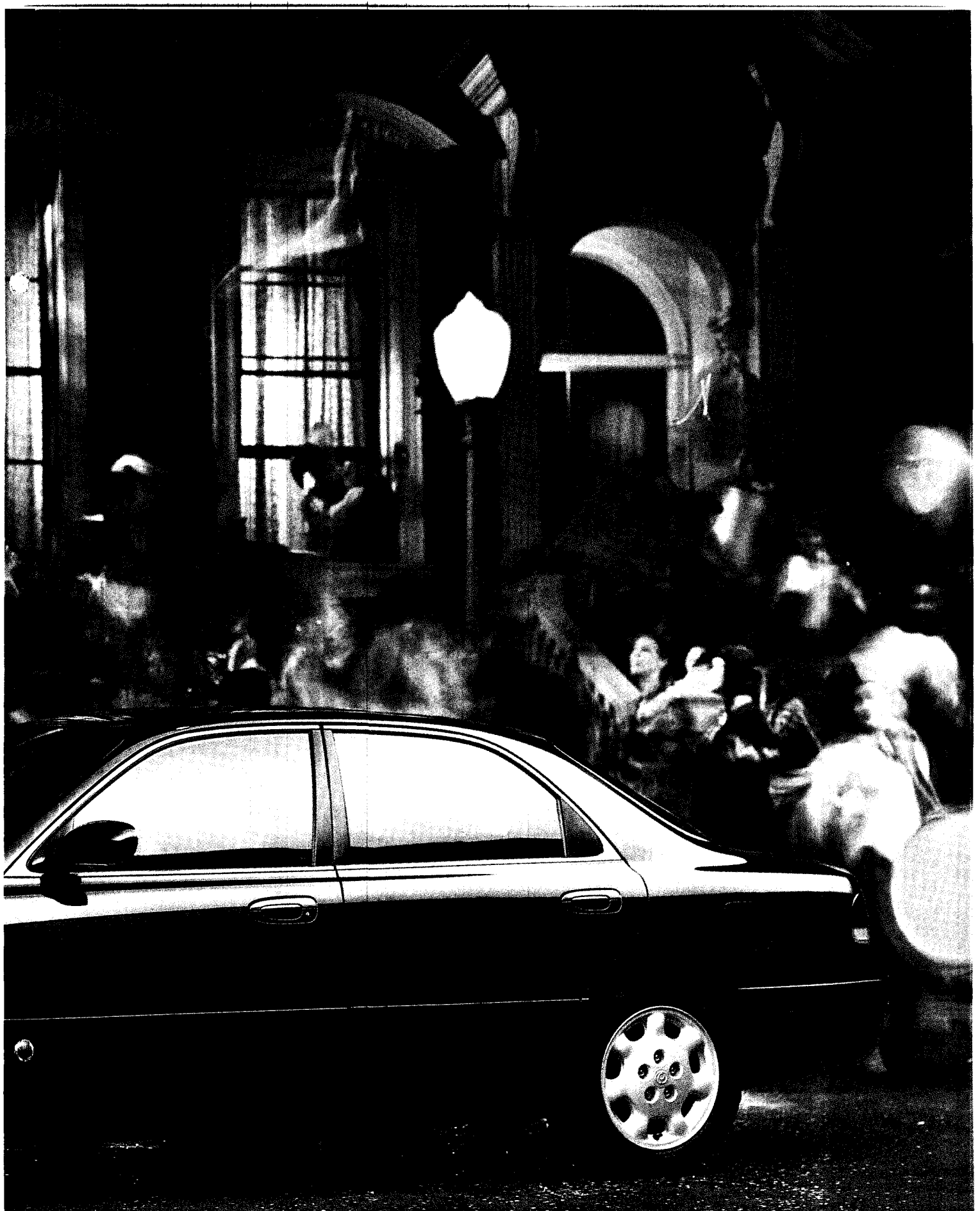
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



SCHOOLING BLACK AMERICANS

Conspicuously absent from the many valid points raised in Claude M. Steele's "Race and the Schooling of Black Americans" (April *Atlantic*), except for the slightest hint in the closing paragraph, is what role family and home life must play to rescue America's stigmatized minority students. If, as Steele argues, doing well in school requires a belief that academic achievement brings self-esteem, and this belief needs "constant reaffirmation," we must presume that reaffirmation must continue, if not originate, in the home. Is that not the first place any student looks for the recognition and outpouring of pride that attend exemplary grades?

Steele's inclination to blame majority teachers for failing to recognize strengths in minority students—the sine qua non of underachievement—is not altogether fair and lends a misguided support to the baleful "separate but equal" doctrine of education. The focus, I submit, needs to be directed as much at the home as at the school. Unspecific polls showing poor black Americans valuing education are about as meaningful as polls taken on love for one's mother. Who would admit to being opposed to education?

Since the poorest segments of our society are widely believed to regard education suspiciously or, worse, with contempt, as a means to an end education probably does not play a major role in upbringing. So the stigma militating against academic success may be in part self-inflicted.

If minority children are encouraged and guided from the outset at home to excel in school, their shells will harden, their skins will thicken, they will shrug off detracting comments, and any attempts at devaluation will fall flat at their feet.

MICHAEL E. ZULLER
Great Neck, N.Y.

I think there may be a simpler explanation for underachievement among black students than the one suggested by Claude Steele. Most black students want very much to enter the mainstream of American society, but some black opinion-makers keep telling them that they belong to a different stream—and they tend to believe it.

The fact is that American society has a predominantly European cultural base. Among the most prized elements of its cultural heritage are classical Greece, Rome, the Renaissance, Elizabethan England, and the political philosophers of the Enlightenment. These are subjects that one should have at least some familiarity with in order to communicate effectively with other people in the mainstream of American society. Fortunately, a person of any ethnic background whatever can lay claim to this cultural heritage by the simple act of learning about it; in fact there is no other form of valid claim to it. But if an individual American says that this cultural heritage does not apply to *him* because he is different—because he is black—then he is simply shooting himself in the foot. Everyone is interested in his own roots, and the pursuit of African studies or black studies is fine as supplemental knowledge; but it should in no wise be allowed to undercut the essential curriculum. And forcing these particular ethnic studies on other students (as Steele appears to advocate, toward the end of his article) seems to me about as useful as introducing obligatory Celtic lessons into the general curriculum.

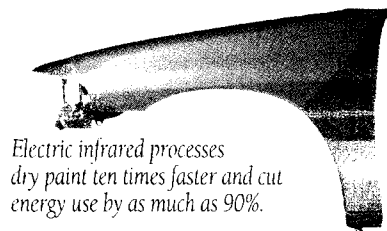
I believe it is time to stop insisting to black students that they are different. It is time to let them get on with their studies and with living as individuals in society, like everyone else.

RALPH STUART SMITH
Bethesda, Md.

Claude Steele's commendable article showed the efforts of someone who has thought long and hard about the

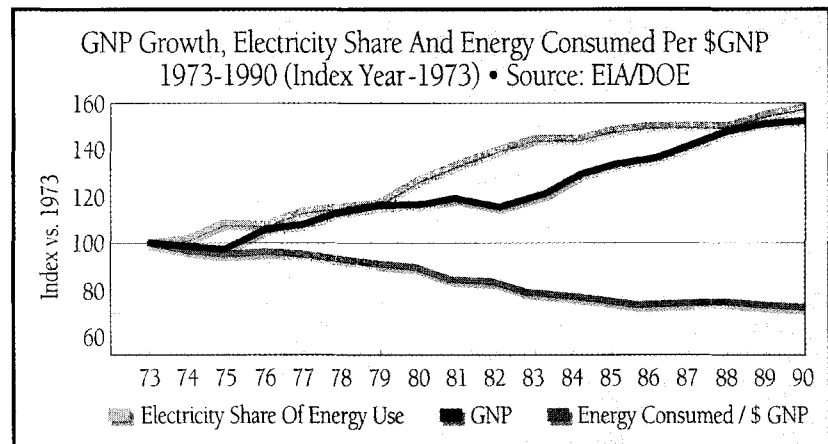
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more subtle issues of racial undervaluation in American academics. Steele has coined a new and powerful lexicon to describe the problems of black achievement in American schools: "racial vulnerability," "disidentification," and "wise schooling." When he pinpoints the association of self-esteem with academic success, he aims directly at the heart of one vital problem in black scholastic success. The four elements of wisdom that he identifies in the schooling of black Americans, and anyone else for that matter, are eminently reasonable and eminently essential for success.

White racism has no doubt enormously affected the creation of black self-esteem. However, the onus of responsibility for the failure of black self-esteem to be validated by academic success must be a shared one. Along with white racism, what has harmed this critical association for so long is the lack of dominant black male role models that confer esteem on black children for their academic pursuits. Black male culture, in part, has generated the pressure to remain authentically black by not being white, by disidentifying with white academics. Young blacks rarely have the chance to observe an intelligent and academic black man as an admirable person—a man who values and esteems his academic successes. Part of the disidentification problem is a black problem.

Until visible and influential black men at every level of black culture are themselves able to confer esteem on other black people for academic success, I cannot see how black culture will ever extricate itself from this interminable perdition. White culture must first genuinely cooperate, but black men (the women cannot do this alone) must also assume the responsibility to provide the esteem children need to become successful in academics. Why is this totally uncool?

RICHARD M. WRIGHT
Westminster, Colo.

Last year I had the pleasure of teaching a course called "Major Black Writers" at Madisonville Community College. This was the first time a course featuring African-American literature had ever been taught at the college, and I can attest to the point that Claude Steele makes in his eloquent essay: African-Americans have an up-

hill battle for self-esteem in our college classrooms.

Nearly all the African-Americans in the class faced the problems Steele points out: lack of positive reinforcement from most teachers, lack of suitable role models (either in their own lives or in the literature presented in the typical English course), and lack of subjects to which they could personally relate. In short, they certainly "disidentified" with school.

My course proved to be an awakening for them. Most of the students had never read Langston Hughes, Paul Laurence Dunbar, or Malcolm X, so reading them for the first time aroused a sense of pride. Indeed, many of the students did extra reading that semester and are still exploring their heritage by continuing their reading six months later. And I cannot but believe that this awakening has renewed their interest in college and may possibly inspire them to continue toward graduation.

JIM MCWILLIAMS
*Madisonville Community College
Madisonville, Ky.*

Claude Steele's article provides only part of the picture. Steele writes, "70 percent of all black Americans at four-year colleges . . . at some point . . . drop out." I am sure that a majority of that number are enrolled at predominantly white institutions. A more optimistic perspective may be found in the low attrition rates at historically black colleges and universities—where the majority of African-American students who are pursuing graduate and professional degrees received their undergraduate education.

CARLA E. MOLETTE
University City, Mo.

Claude Steele concludes that black children need to feel more personal value and self-esteem. Once again the burden is shifted to the educational environment and the white population. As a business professional who has worked in the public and private sectors, I must point out some matters not adequately discussed in the article.

Though blacks constitute 12 percent of the population, articles and news about them appear daily in every part of the country. The majority of the population, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans—the ones who suffer the most—are not mentioned in arti-

cles. Perhaps they should speak louder and complain more instead of helping themselves to achieve.

To many Americans, the term African-American is an affront to our entire citizenry. Do we hear the terms Hispanic-American, French-American, Irish-American? No. Either we are all Americans or we are not. As a melting pot, we are to blend together, not be separate identities.

Do other cultures and races constantly cry "foul"? Do other cultures speak loudly to say, "Give me more. You owe it to me"?

J. A. MICHAELS
North Miami Beach, Fla.

Claude Steele posits the concept of "disidentification" with "unwise" schooling that places an inherent burden and perhaps subconscious stigma on black schoolchildren. His thesis raises several questions:

(1) What happens in the essentially all-black inner-city schools commonly staffed by predominantly black teachers? Where is the stigma coming from in these cases? Are racial factors at work even here, and if so, why?

(2) Where are the parental influences in this analysis? My two sons did not get their sense of self-esteem and feeling of being valued from their school experience, at least not predominantly. They got them from their two parents and their home environment. Can we really blame the school system? Or, conversely, are we asking too much of the schools?

(3) Steele states that schooling must be "made 'wise'—that is, made to see value and promise in black students and to act accordingly." I agree. But I was perplexed when I recalled my own experience tutoring in a predominantly black elementary school in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where the walls were literally covered with posters and biographies of outstanding black Americans, ranging from Jackie Robinson and Joe Louis to Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King. The bulletin boards were filled with student artwork and compositions emphasizing concepts of self-esteem. Was this an unusual school? Were the staff and curriculum extraordinary? I saw a lot of happy faces in that school, despite the cruel conditions that might have existed outside. The kids didn't seem to be suffering under any particular stigma. Perhaps



they were too young, and Steele's thesis is prophetic for their future. I hope not.

(4) I could not help wondering how my two sons, who have gone on to top schools and professions, would have fared if the schools they attended had magically been transplanted to the inner city, surrounded by the drug and crime culture, and they had come home to a single mother burdened with two or three other kids and living off welfare or minimum wage. Given the identical in-school conditions of "wiseness" and self-esteem, identifying with achievement, and valued by their teachers, how would they have turned out?

JOHN J. SCHLAGER
Springfield, N.J.

Claude M. Steele replies:

Haunting nearly every discussion of race in America, like an angry dinner guest ready to explode at the slightest provocation, is the question "Who is to blame?" Are the problems of blacks their own doing or the fault of society? Some letters view my article as being too light on the responsibility of blacks and too heavy on the responsibility of schools. I knew this guest might come to dinner, but I hoped to make some things clear before he stopped listening. I certainly did not want either to absolve blacks of responsibility for their schooling plight or to "disempower" them. I wanted to describe more precisely what it is they are up against

and, in so doing, to explain what it is we *all* can do to help.

I find two general misconceptions present in these letters to be worth correcting:

Black students have low self-esteem, and for their school achievement to improve their esteem must be boosted. Research shows repeatedly that the overall self-esteem of black students is as high as or higher than that of white students. The problem is not the level of their self-esteem but its basis. Because of the vulnerabilities I described, they too often disidentify with schooling as a basis of self-esteem—most typically tying their sense of worth to peer-group relations—and thus lose the motivation that comes

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from having one's self-esteem affected by how well one achieves.

Black families undervalue and undersupport their children's educational efforts. A large study of parents in the greater metropolitan Chicago schools, by Harold Stevenson and some of his colleagues at the University of Michigan, showed that black parents valued education more and spent more time helping their children with homework than white parents in the study. There is evidence that black parents do not visit schools as often as white parents—a fact that I believe is largely attributable to the vulnerabilities I have described. But the idea that they do not care, I believe, is a stereotype with little foundation.

FRIENDLY BEANS

Corby Kummer may be a senior editor of *The Atlantic*, but when he says that pinto beans are usually too bland for cooking ("Friendly Beans," April *Atlantic*), I know he doesn't know beans about beans. Doesn't he know

that there is a whole generation of poor people in the Southwest—at least in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado—who not only were reared on pinto beans but still prefer them to almost anything else there is to eat?

And it isn't as though we aren't connoisseurs; we ate all kinds of beans in our cotton-picking days: butter beans, black-eyed peas, navy beans, and those mouth-full-of-mush kidney beans. But we were always happy when the bag of other beans was finished and we could go back to the good beans: pintos. Far from being too bland to cook, pintos are the only beans I know of that don't have to be tarted up with something like ham bones or herbs to make them edible. There is simply nothing better to eat than a bowl of pinto beans (cooked in a pressure cooker with a little vegetable oil and salt) and homemade biscuits or cornbread, tortillas, soda crackers, or even—since I'm not as poor and ignorant as I used to be—sopapillas or nice fresh croissants.

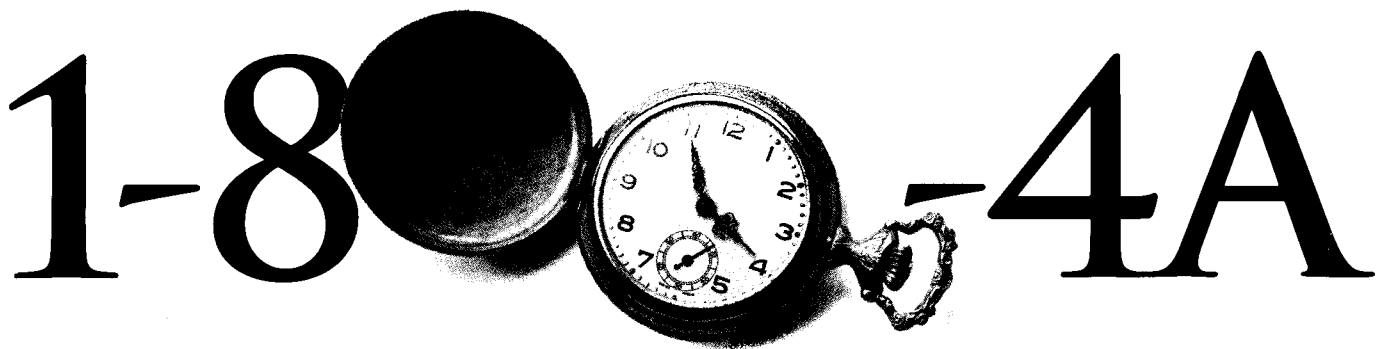
MARY CERONI
Albuquerque, N.M.

I love beans. I have been proclaiming their curative virtues for years. I adore flageolet, navy, garbanzo, black, and even the underappreciated pinto. But, then, I grew up in a house where there was always a pot of beans, and a butter-topped ladleful with a fried egg and a corn tortilla for breakfast was normal.

So I was surprised that Corby Kummer mentioned Cuban and Mexican dishes only in passing. But I was shocked by his insistence that beans need soaking. My evidence is only anecdotal, so I'll quote an expert: Diana Kennedy says, in *The Art of Mexican Cooking*, "*Do not* soak the beans first; the skin gives off an unpleasant flavor. If you do, then don't throw out the soaking water with all the minerals and flavor. Instead throw out the book that tells you to do so" (*italics hers*).

DÉSIRÉE ZAMORANO
Pasadena, Calif.

Corby Kummer's article "Friendly Beans" omits a very significant fact: for many people fava beans, which he extols, are decidedly unfriendly.



Everybody takes a load off when they retire.



Persons who suffer from a deficiency of the blood enzyme G6PD discover that eating fava beans triggers hemolytic anemia. Their red blood cells self-destruct, releasing hemoglobin and bilirubins into the blood plasma. The free hemoglobin gives these patients a jaundiced appearance and the bilirubins end up in the gallbladder as gall stones. These sufferers are often misdiagnosed as having hepatitis.

The condition is hereditary, and the aberrant gene is carried on the X chromosome. Thus it is much more common among males than among females. The G6PD deficiency can be detected by a simple blood test, which is rarely done. It may therefore be much more prevalent than is now believed.

JOSEPH LETSON
Yellow Springs, Ohio

Corby Kummer replies:

I'm sorry to slur a bean so many people remember fondly, but I've not yet encountered a pinto to change my mind. Probably a taste of Mary Ceroni's would do the trick.

I have, however, changed my position on dried fava beans, which can be extremely tasty, especially ones I tried recently, in a puree with olive oil and bitter greens, in Apulia, a region of southeastern Italy where they are a standard dish. Recent experiments with new dried favas from Phipps Ranch, near San Francisco, confirmed my error of judgment.

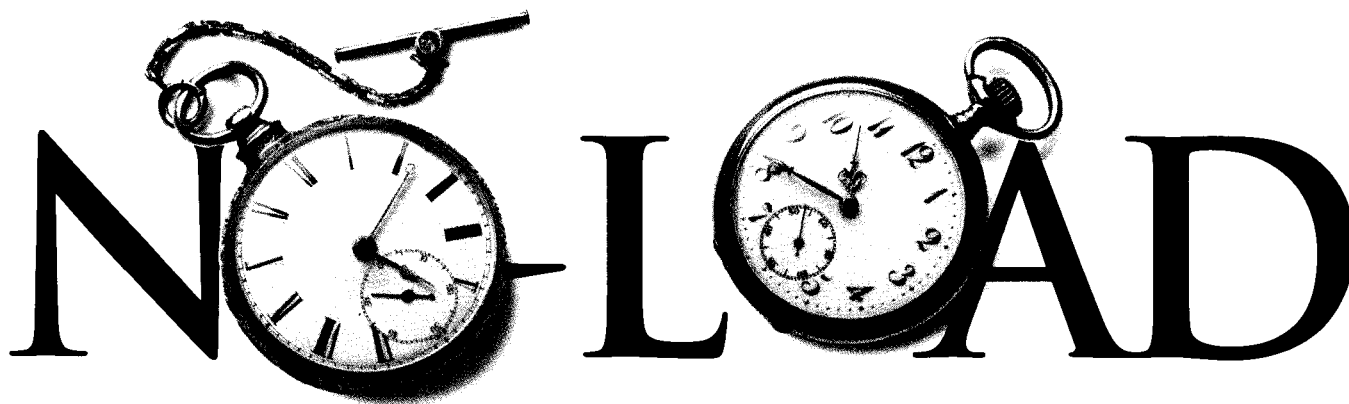
I was unaware that favas still pose a health hazard, and am glad that Joseph Letson points it out. In Italy they are "the emblematic dish of death," according to Carol Field's invaluable *Celebrating Italy*, eaten to commemorate the dead; the Greeks, she writes, interpreted the black spot that appears on the plant as a "stain of death." Pythagoras thought that because their hollow stems reached toward the underworld, the beans might contain the souls of the dead. He forbade his followers to eat them, perhaps knowing their association with disease.

Many people do dispense with soaking. My advice is to try cooking unsoaked beans, preferably from a reli-

able source, so that you know they are from a recent harvest, and see how you like them. Diana Kennedy's advice about never throwing out soaking water, however, applies only to those with strong stomachs—which of course Mexicans, as regular bean eaters, have.

NINETIES FICTION

Your choice of Russell Banks to review my new critical book, *Talents and Technicians: Literary Chic and the New Assembly-Line Fiction* ("A Dyspeptic View of Nineties Fiction," *May Atlantic*), raises a rather serious ethical question, since he himself confesses that in 1986 I wrote a partly negative review of his fiction in *The New York Times Book Review*. That is the sort of conflict of interest that book editors are normally very careful about, and it is the common practice at the *Times Book Review* and other review publications to inquire about the existence of such conflicts when they select reviewers. Mr. Banks has also been profes-



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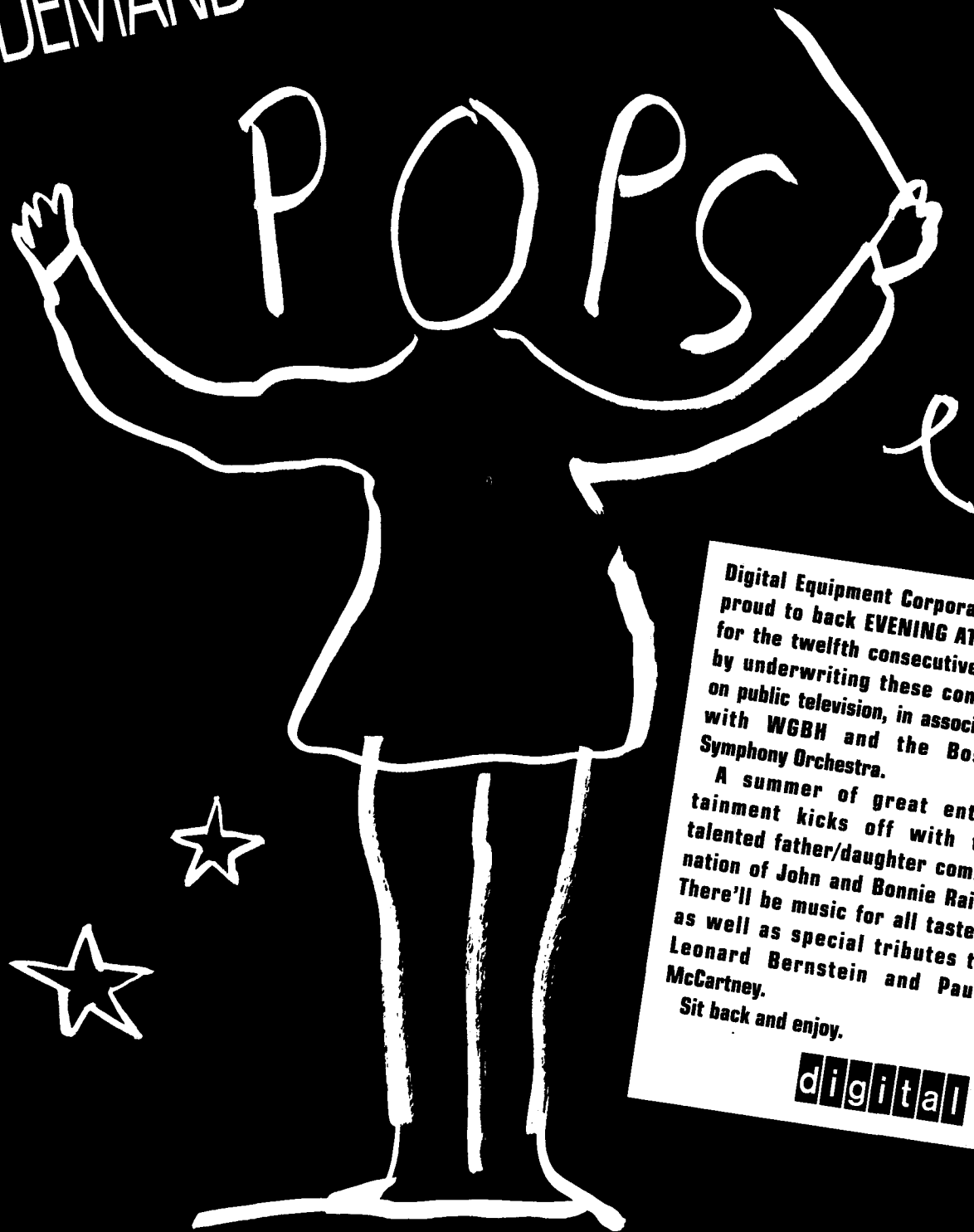
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sionally associated with writers' conferences and is undoubtedly friendly with some of the writers I discuss in the book.

But to put this in the best possible light, it may be that you wanted someone connected with those writers to offer an adversarial response to my views. If your intention in doing this was to provoke useful controversy, I can have no objection. However, Mr. Banks spends too much of his very long review quarreling with my choice of writers to discuss, even though my principle of selection was clearly defined in the book's preface, and he does not contradict or even engage my specific arguments about either the fiction I evaluate or the conditions that I suggest may account for the nature and quality of that fiction. He fails in particular to take note of the major emphasis I give to the possibility that the influence of the many graduate creative-writing programs may in part account for the flatness and sameness, the "assembly-line" quality, of so much of the fiction, nor does he mention any part of the rather substantial discussion relating to social and historical factors that may also be influential.

Finally, Mr. Banks objects to my holding up as a standard of literary excellence the work of some of the older writers, such as Pynchon, Gaddis, Mailer, Vonnegut, and Heller. I can only ask, to what other contemporary American writers can one look to provide such a standard? They have produced much of the best, the most challenging, and, yes, the most "significant" fiction of our time, and I suspect that they will continue to be recognized for this achievement long after some of the newer writers I discuss have passed from our memories.

JOHN W. ALDRIDGE
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Russell Banks may be right about John Aldridge's dyspepsia, but it is undeniable that we have been flooded with extravagantly praised yet colorless and trivial fiction these past few years. Banks suggests that a lack of grand ideas has left writers with only "semiotics, hermeneutics, [and] deconstruction."

That misses the point. Although we can fairly blame deconstructionists

friend writes a sycophantic review of the wangler's or the editor's latest book. Needless to say, when someone points out this incestuous little arrangement, the literary clergy unite and attack.

JASON P. MITCHELL
Decatur, Ala.

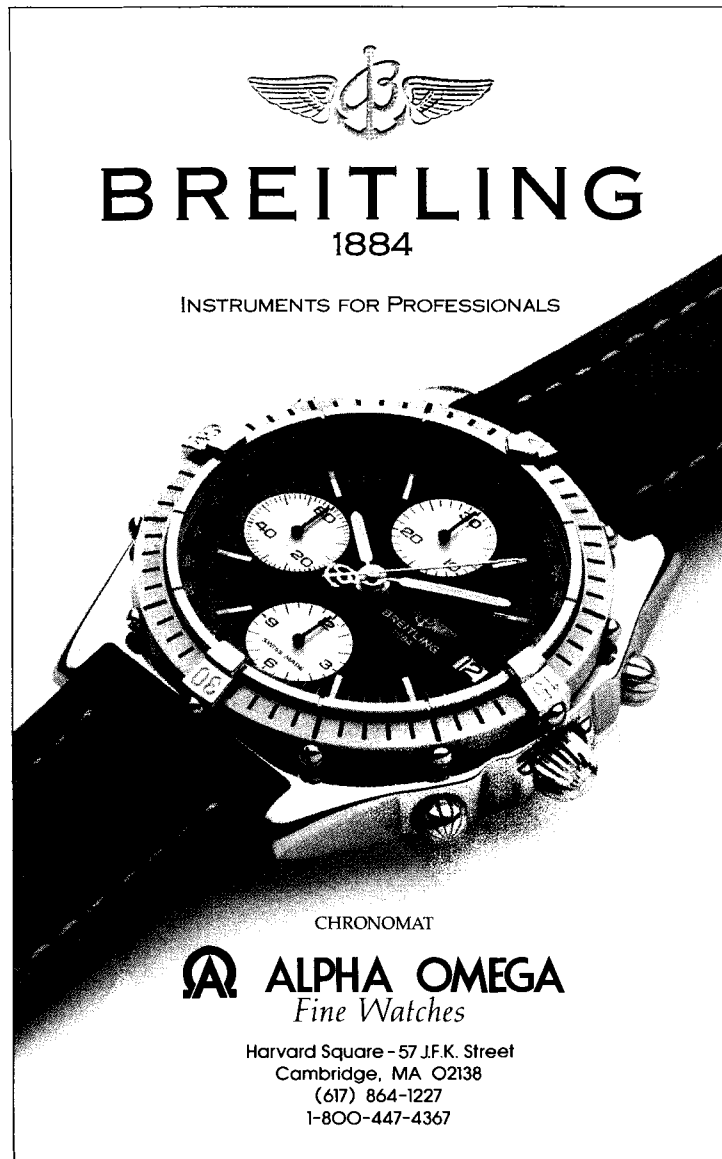
Russell Banks replies:

It was no "confession" that six years ago John Aldridge wrote a "partly negative review" of my work in *The New York Times Book Review*; it was a simple acknowledgement of the fact—mere truth in advertising.

As for my being "undoubtedly friendly" with some of the writers Mr. Aldridge discusses, let me say that, indeed, a few are friends. But wouldn't it have been strange, and might I therefore have been an even more inappropriate reviewer of Mr. Aldridge's book than he claims, if none of the writers he discusses were my friends? I would have to have been a very lonely and alienated fellow, and surely my review would have reflected such a dismal condition. The point is that in his letter Mr. Aldridge argues *ad hominem* and says nothing that straightforwardly confronts my criticism of his book.

It is true, however, that I did not discuss his belief that "the many graduate creative-writing programs may in part account for the flatness and sameness, the 'assembly-line' quality" of recent American fiction. But since I was arguing in the first place against his

notion that most recent American fiction suffers from "flatness and sameness," I could hardly bother arguing about the possible causes. Certainly there is much to be said both for and against graduate creative-writing programs, but Mr. Aldridge's complaint addresses neither side of the argument, and therefore, regarding this subject, the kindest thing is probably to ignore what he *has* said. Which, I confess, is what I did.




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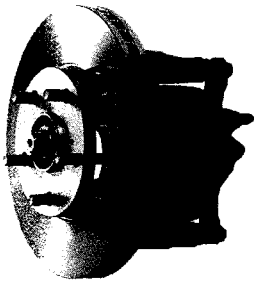
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for many things, they are not responsible for the wretched conformity of contemporary fiction. For that we have to look to the creative-writing industry, a.k.a. the Master of Fine Arts programs.

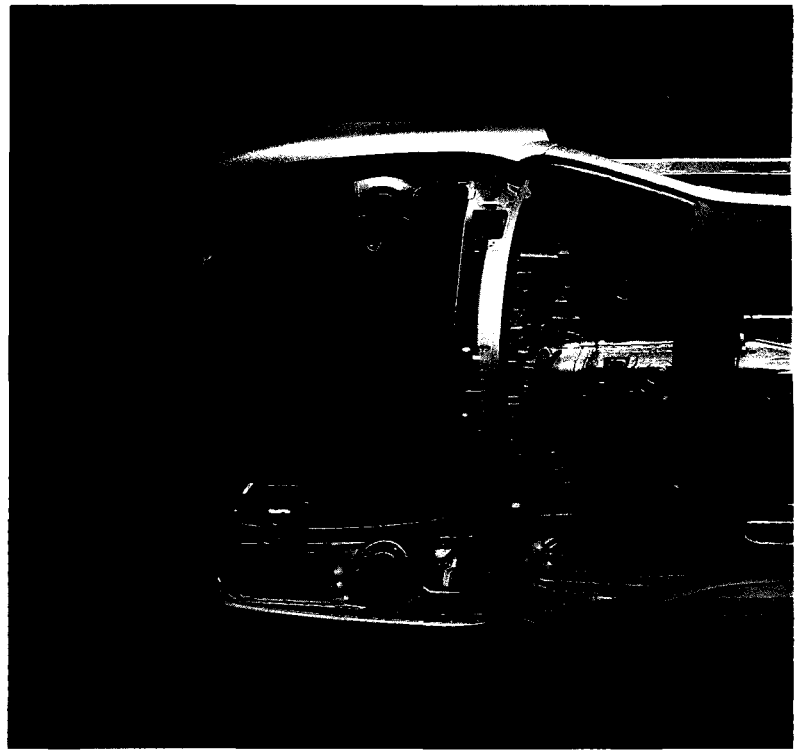
Forming a national daisy chain, academic writers hype the work of their grad-school buddies. One wangles a friend an invitation to be a visiting writer in her program, or puts a friend's work in the journal he edits, and the

Our Idea Of Cri

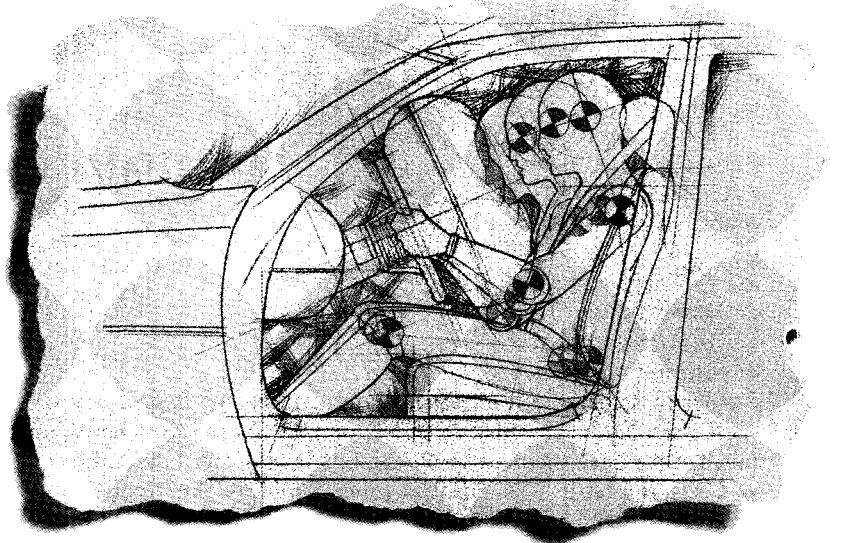
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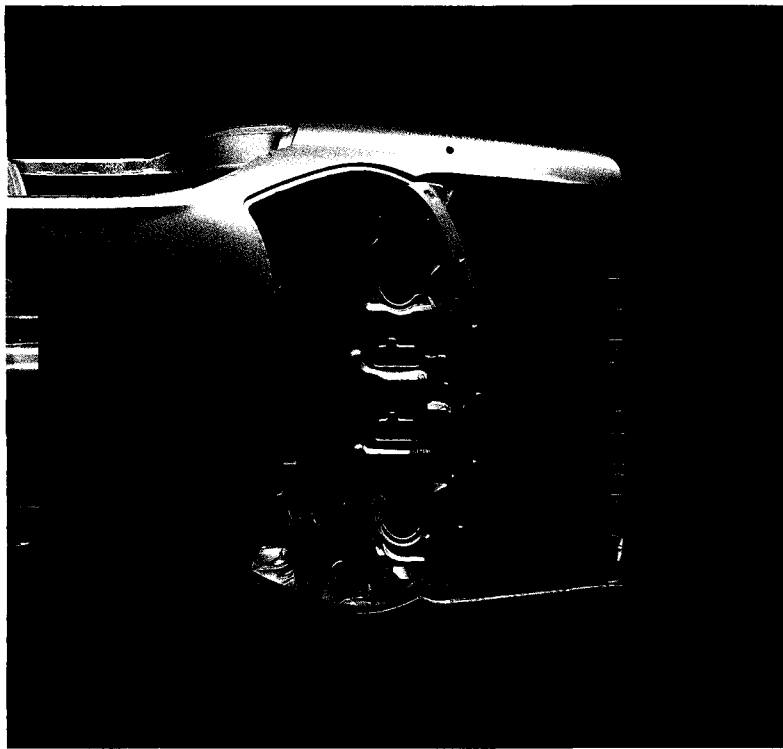


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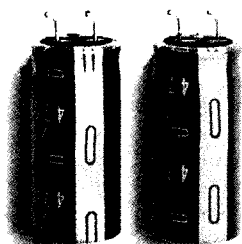


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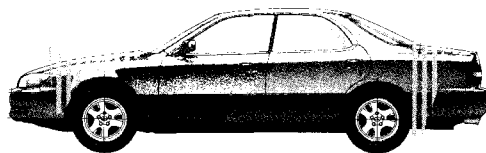
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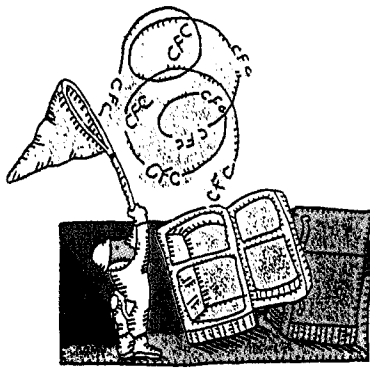
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GOVERNMENT

July 1, as of today, under the Clean Air Act, anyone servicing or disposing of refrigerators or air-conditioners must capture the chlorofluorocarbons in the refrigerant chemicals. Up to now CFCs from these appliances were vented into the atmosphere; CFCs are thought to be a chief cause of the ozone hole. 13-16, the Democratic National Convention, in Madison Square Garden. 26, several provisions of the 1990 Americans With Disabilities Act take effect for companies with 25 or more employees. Interviewers can no longer ask about an applicant's physical or mental health, and cannot reject someone because he or she might add to the firm's medical costs. Nor can they reject disabled applicants out of hand; instead, they must give them an opportunity to explain how they would perform the job. Employers also must usually make "reasonable accommodations" for applicants and employees with physical- or mental-health problems, such as providing a sign-language interpreter for a deaf person.

DEMOGRAPHICS

More young men and women lose their virginity during the summer than at other times of year: according to a recent study, 25 percent of those who have their first sexual experience in a given year have it in June or July. One reason is undoubtedly that school vacations give adolescents more free time. Biological factors, including seasonal shifts in hor-



THE JULY ALMANAC

mone levels, may also contribute, along with cultural factors such as films portraying sexual activity at beach parties or camp. After years of focusing almost solely on young women, sexologists are beginning to turn to men as well. Their findings suggest that the view of young men as sexual adventurers is largely a myth. A study last year found that sexually experienced teenage males reported, on average, only 1.9 partners in a year, and estimated that during that time they had an average of 23 acts of intercourse—fewer than two per month.



THE SKIES

July 1, Islamic New Year, the first day of the year 1413. The Islamic calendar follows a lunar cycle and also, by tradition, depends on observation rather than computation. A new lunar month begins the first time after the Moon is new that it can be seen at sunset. A lunar year has 10 or 11 fewer days than the solar calendar; thus, in the Gregorian year 2000, the Islamic year 1421 will begin in early April. 14, Full Moon, also known this month as the Thunder, Mead, or Hay Moon. 16, the waning Moon passes just above the bright planet Saturn.

FOOD

July is a peak month for harvesting U.S. seaweed for direct consumption. Seaweed has long been an additive in prepared foods—it can be found in hamburgers, ice cream, and pet food—and has numerous pharmaceutical and industrial applications as well. In recent years a handful of companies have also begun harvesting some species for sale, as "sea vegetables," to natural-food stores, mostly by having workers for-



age on foot or in small boats during low tide. The more-lucrative Asian food market in this country is supplied exclusively by imports from Japan, Korea, and China. At least one U.S. company hopes to break into this market by cultivating and processing nori, the species used in most sushi wrappers. Such processing requires expensive Japanese machinery and techniques; similar efforts by other domestic companies have so far failed.

Q & A

Why do all area codes have zero or one as their middle digit?

At the dawn of long-distance direct dialing, in 1947, AT&T devised this scheme so that equipment could quickly differentiate between calls outside one's area code and toll calls within it (local exchanges had second digits of two through nine). The system proved ultimately inadequate: because of the proliferation of fax machines, computer modems, cellular phones, and other technology, telephone numbers within some area codes have been used up, and in these cases new area codes have been assigned. Only one unused code remains. The likely remedy is a system that creates additional combinations by allowing area-code-style numbers to be assigned as local exchanges, and vice versa—which could lengthen the time needed to connect calls. Critics are lobbying for alternatives, including simply appending a fourth digit to existing area codes.



HEALTH & SAFETY

July 7, as of today all restaurants, bars, movie theaters, concert halls, and health clubs in New York City must have on hand special cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) masks with one-way air valves. The masks are intended to encourage persons who have been trained in CPR to offer assistance during medical emergencies, by assuring them that they do not need to be concerned about contracting infectious diseases such as hepatitis and tuberculosis (and, however unfounded the fear, AIDS) through CPR. Such assistance can be critical in a congested urban area like New York: in that city it takes more than eight minutes, on average, for emergency medical help to reach the scene. To be successful, CPR should begin within one to four minutes of a cardiac arrest.



50 YEARS AGO

Thurman W. Arnold, writing in the July, 1942, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "We must protect big business from domination by fat-minded men whose principal business policy is to avoid a competitive race for efficiency in production and distribution. These men have been too lazy, too timid, to risk their power in a competitive struggle to see which can serve the consumer best. Their skill has not been in production, but in public relations. Their competence lies in intrigue and in corporate manipulation to coerce into their restrictive schemes the people in the industry who are interested in full production. . . . They believe in a system of soft enterprise,—soft in the way that an octopus is soft, with tentacles that stifle and suffocate. . . ."

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

Force of Numbers

Demographics and destiny

A FEW DAYS after George Bush's celebrated encounter with a supermarket check-out scanner, when he displayed wonder and surprise at a technology that to most Americans is as familiar as the telephone, I happened upon Orson Welles's *The Magnificent Ambersons* on television, and watched it for the fifth or sixth time.

The Magnificent Ambersons is set in the Midwest at the turn of this century, and one of its most famous scenes is a dinner-table discussion at the Amberson mansion about the virtues and drawbacks of a new piece of technology called the automobile. One of the dinner guests, Eugene Morgan, is a maker of automobiles, and when another guest, George Amberson Minafer, calls automobiles a nuisance, Morgan delivers a prophetic soliloquy. "I'm not sure George is wrong about automobiles," he says.

"With all their speed forward they may be a step backward in civilization. It may be that they won't add to the beauty of the world or the life of men's souls. I'm not sure. But automobiles have come, and almost all outward things are going to be different because of what they bring. They're going to alter war, and they're going to alter peace. I think men's minds are going to be changed in subtle ways because of automobiles."

The Magnificent Ambersons was made in 1942, when some of the unintended consequences of the automobile's ascendancy were already apparent. Orson Welles—or Booth Tarkington, who wrote the novel on which the movie is based—was not as fully prescient as Eugene Morgan seems to be. But many of the automobile's consequences remained as yet unknown. Still to come were the destruction of America's downtowns, the predominance of suburbia, the dependence on Middle Eastern oil, the proliferation of air pollution, the invention of the shopping mall, the strangulation of the national parks. Eugene Morgan's cautionary speech has an authentic, haunting quality, and whenever I have come upon that scene, it has brought to mind this question: Is there a technology existing now that, unsuspected by us all, will one day be seen to have changed the country as profoundly and unpredictably as the automobile has?

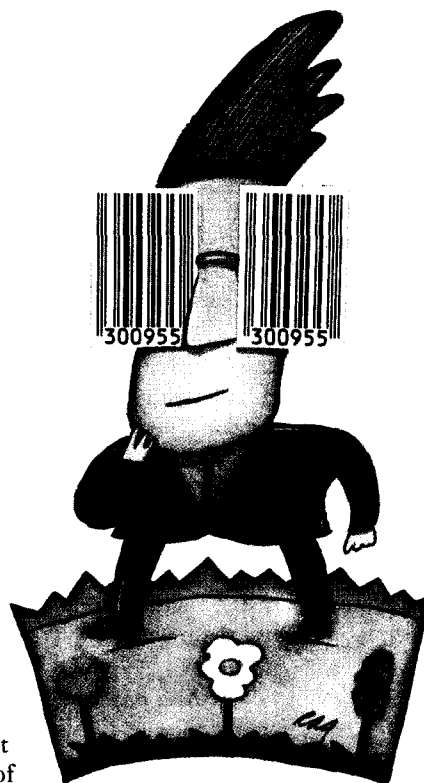
When the question came up this last time, I thought of George Bush at the check-out counter.

IT IS HARDLY a secret that the science of demographics is rapidly becoming more sophisticated. The laser scanner used by retail outlets of all kinds to read product codes and compile a data base about what people buy is one of

the tools that lies at its heart. So is the list of questions that sales clerks everywhere now seem to ask—"Length of time at current address?"—before even modest transactions can be concluded. So are the 800 numbers for various things which keep a record, eventually to be sold, of the origin of every call. A demographic infrastructure is being put into place in which government data, retail data, mail-order data, credit-card data, banking data, medical data, and data of various other kinds are continually cross-tabulated, creating a parallel universe in which all of us exist incorporeally; in which our every attribute, our every wish, habit, and inclination, is known and accessible.

No shrouded committee of manipulators is directing this activity. It is a campaign with count-

less generals and as many motivations. The advantages of having a demographic infrastructure of this kind in place, harnessed to phone, fax, computer, cable, and mail, do not need belaboring: it makes marketing easier, raising money easier, building loyalty easier, finding criminals easier, doing research easier. Perhaps just as important, it makes avoiding trouble easier—trouble from deadbeats, trouble from those who may detest what is being sold or said.



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3-7, Columbus Quincentennial weekend, celebrations throughout the city, (800) 892-1492

3-August 30, Free Summergarden concerts of music by John Cage, Friday and Saturday evenings, Museum of Modern Art, (212) 708-9480

4, Operation Sail's Parade of Tall Ships, New York Harbor, (800) 892-1492

4, Macy's Fourth of July Fireworks, lower Hudson River, (212) 560-4495

4-5 and 11-12, 16th annual American Crafts Festival, Lincoln Center, (212) 677-4627

5, The Great July 4th Festival, Water Street from Fulton to State streets, (212) 809-4900

7-30, *Serious Fun!* avant-garde performance art, Lincoln Center, (212) 875-5050

9-August 15, Free Thursday and Saturday evening concerts—including folk, jazz, blues, swing, and classical music—on the pier, South Street Seaport, (212) 669-9424

11, Stars and Stripes Regatta, New York Harbor, (212) 669-9424

13-16, Democratic National Convention, Madison Square Garden, (212) 788-1992

14, Museum Mile Festival, upper Fifth Avenue, (212) 877-0457

This is only a sampling of what is happening in the city this month. For a more complete listing, call the New York Convention & Visitors Bureau at (212) 397-8222.

What are the consequences of this marriage of computers and data collection besides the straightforward ones that a salesman might point to? One that already gets attention is invasion of privacy: for a price, perfect strangers can learn intimate details about the life of almost any American. People in the demographics industry were confronted with this issue very quickly, just as those who made the first automobiles quickly realized that by enabling people to go places faster, cars would also cause accidents and fatalities. But the sort of consequences I wonder about are the ones whose specific tilt we simply can't predict, the ones that fifty or a hundred years from now people will realize crept up quietly. And in this case, the consequences may affect something as basic as the country's personality.

WE TAKE for granted the degree to which the United States is unified by mass marketing and mass communication. In his book *The American Commonwealth* (1888) the British historian and diplomat James Bryce, who visited the United States many times, gave one chapter the title "The Uniformity of American Life." Bryce acknowledged the existence in America of stubborn regionalism and local variation and, too, the exotic elements introduced by wave after wave of immigration, but he went on to observe that, nonetheless, the "ideas of men and women, their fundamental beliefs and their superficial tastes, their methods of thinking and fashions of talking" were far more alike in the United States than they were in European countries. There were a number of reasons for this, including a common political culture and the nation's very newness. But it was also true that mass communication, at the time conducted primarily by means of national magazines and mail-order catalogues, and eventually to be conducted by radio and television, had become a force in the shaping of an American culture. Mass communication creates a continuum of small talk, gossip, news, jokes, celebrities, commercials. It makes us aware of life-styles and concerns that are not our own, exposes us to advertising meant for others. Without it, Walter Mondale's "Where's the beef?" would have been impossible. Mass communication, and the industries that came into being in tandem with it, can be irritating, dis-

tasteful, and worse, but they account for the sense we all have that "America" is a nationwide phenomenon.

Modern demographic technologies are a counterforce. They communicate not with whole populations but with components—environmentalists, chess players, Republicans, accountants who golf, suburban Chinese, drinkers of scotch. Quite apart from their effectiveness at accomplishing a stated task—selling a product or service, changing a mind—they act to fracture and isolate. We inhabit a world in which, increasingly, the messages sent by businesses and politicians and organizations of various kinds get sent only to certain people, and can be individually tailored for greatest impact. Looking at it from the other direction, we inhabit a world in which, increasingly, households will receive only those messages in which someone at home can be assumed to be interested. If the aim is to be universally persuasive, messages from a single source to many different destinations can even be in conflict, and no one will necessarily notice the discrepancies.

Now imagine demographic technology raised to the *n*th power, and imagine a world in which it has been employed for five or six decades. Will the manipulation of people's decisions have become unimaginably sophisticated? Will the membranes that divide individuals from one another have become impassable and calcified? What are the implications for communal feeling and public life? Will people feel linked to others mainly through narrow pathways of similarity or proximity? Will our minds be altered in subtle ways? I have asked these questions of dozens of people who use demographic technologies in their work and found no one who has given such matters much thought.

TOWARD THE END of *The Magnificent Ambersons*, when Isabel Amberson Minafer rides home to the family mansion after a long absence, she looks out the window at the town where she grew up, and sighs and says: "Changed. So changed." When the courteous person taking my phone order at L. L. Bean asks me to read the number above my name on the mailing label, I can't help cooperating. But I know I'm contributing to a phenomenon whose consequences will surprise us; and I know it can't be stopped.

—Cullen Murphy

Where's the
gorilla?

After the show,
we just headed down
Broadway and fell into
this charming Cappuccino
Place. We were both still
full from dinner, but we
couldn't resist. Cozy little
booths... A jazz ensemble.

Chrysler Bldg.
42nd & Lex.

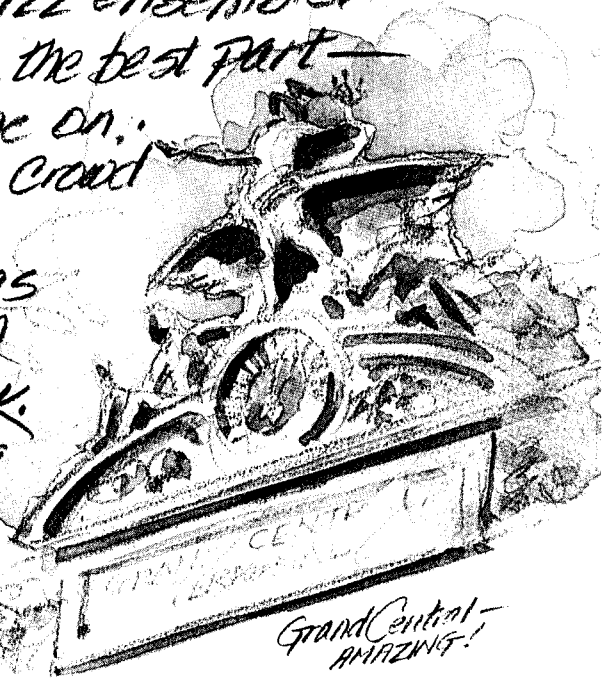
What a find. Oh, the best part—

they had this singer come on.

She was great. She had the whole crowd
singing. Then, she passed the mic
around and we all sang solos. It was
hysterical. We stayed till 1:45 in
the morning—and walked back.

There was this guy selling
paintings a few blocks
from the hotel... And
wouldn't you know, after
5 mos. of searching for

something for the kitchen wall, we found it
in 2 minutes. You should've seen us. I don't know
what was bigger—the painting or the grins on
our faces. And all I kept thinking was



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Amid new affluence for some, deep cuts in education and health care for others: above, a children's hospital in Managua

NICARAGUA

After the Sandinistas

Free enterprise has replaced a planned economy, with the usual mixed results—reduced inflation, but growing unemployment and shortages

ON MY LAST trip to Nicaragua, I picked up a prostitute, one of a dozen or so young women on parade each night on the street that runs alongside Managua's Intercontinental Hotel. Her name was Angela. Although she seemed suspicious when I said I wanted only to talk, she demurely buttoned her jacket, climbed into the car, and agreed to a price for her time.

On an earlier visit to Nicaragua, in 1990, I hadn't seen prostitutes on the street. Like revolutionaries in Cuba, which was a bordello for gringo tourists before Castro's time, the Sandinistas tried to eliminate prostitution, which had flourished during the Somoza years. They failed, especially after they revised their collapsing economic plan in the late 1980s and began to slide away from socialist-style welfare spending.

But prostitution remained an underground occupation, little more than an embarrassment to the government. No longer. Since Violeta Barrios de Chamorro ascended to the presidency, in April of 1990, Angela's workplace has become crowded and open. At Managua's few decent hotels or at a popular fairgrounds called La Piñata, she said, I could find anything I might want.

These women are not working so that they can afford a few luxuries. They are on the streets in order to feed young children or care for aging relatives. Despite the competition, Angela, twenty-three, said she can make a hundred dollars or more in a good night—a sixth the annual income of her average compatriot. "There are thousands of us now," she told me. "It wasn't like this before."

The lives of these women are a measure of the desperation driving an increasingly impoverished population down new roads in search of survival, even as a small wealthy class, backed by the government, paves its own highway, carting much of the pre-revolutionary world along with it.

The free market has returned to Nicaragua. It has replaced the draining nine-year war against the U.S.-backed contra forces and the five-year U.S. trade embargo that choked the life out of the economy. In the process, it is reversing the changes wrought by the

country's Sandinista revolution, which these days seems almost as dead and discredited as Soviet communism.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front has been battered by assaults from inside and outside the party since its stunning rejection by 59 percent of the voters two years ago. The culture and economy that the Sandinistas tried and failed to transform have weathered the attempt. Transformation of a different kind is under way, and its signposts are everywhere.

Just a few years ago the country struggled with inflation near 15,000 percent and shortages of everything from toilet paper to cooking oil; now the inflation rate is below 20 percent, and downtown Managua boasts Ray-Ban billboards and a gleaming new Benetton outlet.

In the past only a few Nicaraguans owned cars, and crater-sized potholes endangered their existence; now the highways are starting to fill with luxury Mazdas and four-wheel-drive Toyota jeeps. In two years the number of cars in Nicaragua—most of them in Managua—has doubled. Potholes in the capital are usually filled quickly, and office workers contend with rush hour in their workday commute.

Several thousand new businesses have opened their doors since 1990, according to an unofficial estimate. Pre-



viously abandoned storefront windows display Jordache jeans and Nintendo games. Chinese and French restaurants compete with expensive pizzerias. Computer consulting firms, private banks, video stores, and corner groceries have blossomed. Supermarkets are stocked with imported foods from other Central American countries and the United States.

The Chamorro government is rightly proud of the successes that brought these changes to the war-ravaged country. Aside from taming a hyperinflation that was the fourth highest in the twentieth-century world, it has devalued and stabilized a drifting currency; renegotiated and cut by a fifth its \$10.8 billion foreign debt, which was the highest per capita in the world; trimmed a bloated public payroll that the government couldn't support; and worked miraculous deals with contentious Sandinista labor unions.

"This has been a process of curing the economy," says Ernesto Robleto Falla, the government's chief spokesman. "What the government has done is break the spiral of economic disaster."

MARTHA SALINAS couldn't agree more. Faith in the new government and its economic reforms persuaded her to return to Nicaragua last year after ten years in voluntary exile in Miami and San Salvador. After a year of groundwork she and her sister opened Nicaragua's first Benetton store last December. The elegant outlet, situated in the revived Metro Center shopping area, might have been airlifted from an upscale mall in the United States. Its \$60 shirts and \$33 T-shirts share space with the chain's trademark sweaters and jeans. So far Salinas is pleased with her decision to invest in the new Nicaragua.

"I believed Benetton would do well in Nicaragua, and I believe that Nicaraguans should have opened a store like this here," she told me. "All Nicaraguans now must bring something so that our country will move forward."

In Nicaragua irony is never in short supply. A few hundred feet from Salinas's store is a parking lot full of vendors selling brooms, lottery tickets, pillows, and numerous useless gadgets. José Chavarria, one of the broom salesmen, told me he makes six dollars a day.

The vendors are part of a downward spiral that Robleto, the government

spokesman, was clearly uncomfortable discussing. Like a Hollywood movie set with nothing behind the building fronts, the country's apparent newfound affluence masks a very different reality: most Nicaraguans are not living at all well. They are falling victim to what could be called the "Latinoamericanization" of Nicaragua—a classic pattern of a widening gap between rich and poor.

In her inaugural address, on April 25, 1990, Chamorro promised to protect the country's poor and vulnerable—people already in pain from a Sandinista economic-adjustment package that was putting the squeeze on them. But in "curing" the economy, as Robleto put it, the government has had to ration precious resources and screw the vise tighter on much of the population. Government budget figures show that public spending for health care, basic-food subsidies, education, public transportation, and social programs has been drastically reduced. The situation has led to widespread talk about the risk of "social explosion."

People who were once able to feed their families with the help of government food donations now simply haven't the money to buy what they need. A survey last fall found that the lowest Nicaraguan salary, down sharply from several years earlier, does not nearly cover the cost of a subsistence diet for a family of six. Indeed, a new phenomenon visible at Managua's major intersections is waves of vendors and beggars, many of them children, who mob cars at the stoplights.

Jobs have become scarce. Official underemployment and unemployment together stand at 54 percent, far above the peak levels of the Sandinista years. Through April of 1992 the government trimmed its payroll by offering severance pay of \$2,000, which was accepted by 23,000 workers. Another 20,000 soldiers and policemen were cashiered. But new workers keep appearing like an unstoppable force: 120,000 able bodies are ready to join the work force each year.

Minimal health care was once guaranteed; now patients are finding themselves shut out of hospitals and clinics. Private facilities are opening their doors while public clinics are closing theirs. Hospitals report worsening shortages of everything from suture thread to bedding, due to budget cuts.

"I've seen very sick, very poor patients who had to pay for their own x-rays," Daisy Rios, a nurse in the city of Matagalpa, told me. "They'd ask the patient if he had any money. If he did, they'd send him to a private hospital. If not, they'd send him home. If you go to a clinic, you don't see people in the waiting room. Why go if you can't pay?"

One staffer at a Managua shelter for abandoned, abused, and handicapped children told me that nearly half the center's ninety-seven workers had accepted the government's offer of severance. Unable to afford to fix a broken pump, the shelter has had no running water since June of last year. The staffer had tired of it and said she planned to join the exodus.

Robleto says that the government still cares about the disadvantaged but that its focus has to be elsewhere in order to save the economy. He insists that people are no worse off now than they were under the Sandinistas.

"People have been poor for many years," he told me. "How do you measure poverty? By the people in the street? By the number of houses of cardboard? Or by the number of people who don't get an education? We found those people when we came in. It's impossible to do anything until we stabilize the economy."

If those are his measuring rods, they had better be long. Managua is home to 1.3 million people, about a third of the country's population, and still growing. Nicaragua's economy has traditionally been agricultural, but low prices for major farm products and insufficient bank credit have driven thousands from the country to the city, where they have settled in vast shantytowns.

Crime against people and property, formerly almost unheard of in Managua, has become one of the capital's most discussed problems. People with cars are afraid to park them on the street at night. Single women are warned by friends never to walk alone, even in seemingly safe neighborhoods in daylight.

Everyone, including government supporters, recognizes that the numbers of cardboard houses and people living in the streets have risen dramatically. At a press conference last February, Antonio Lacayo Oyanguren, Chamorro's chief of staff and economic wizard, conceded that the government is worried by the social disruption.



Some argue that the price of stabilization has been too high. And government officials admit they haven't come close to attracting the kind of foreign and domestic investment they need to stoke the neo-liberal, trickle-down fire they are counting on to ignite the economy.

Though the Benetton store and the pizzerias may be good for the country's image, they are not the kind of businesses that create many jobs. Investors in industry of that kind look for a functioning infrastructure, a healthy, educated work force, and an efficient distribution system.

Gilberto Cuadra is one of Nicaragua's leading businessmen, an engineer and a banker who headed the country's most important business group and battled the Sandinista government for much of the 1980s. He believes that years of adjustment will be needed before Nicaragua can recover from the damage done to business, industry, and agriculture. Meanwhile, he says, his country cannot hope to compete with other Third World countries—Mexico, Hon-

duras, and Eastern European nations among them—in attracting investment.

I had spoken with him last on the day before Chamorro's inauguration. At that time he was headed for a Cabinet post in the new government (he later refused it) and he was pleased that business-oriented free-marketeers were taking over. But even so, his comments carried a note of caution. He seemed keenly aware that Chamorro's vow to turn the economy around within a hundred days was unrealistic. Since then he has tangled with her government, challenging its optimism on the basis of his experience with Nicaraguan business and labor.

"The few factories that are still here have machinery that is twenty or twenty-five years old and badly maintained," Cuadra told me in an interview in his cramped, noisily air-conditioned office. "Worst of all, their technology is obsolete. So the products from these factories are inferior to and less numerous than products from elsewhere in Central America. The prospects for new investment here are bad. This is what

we've said. The government says we are subversive, but we can't sell this country for investment."

NICARAGUA has its own style of disorganization. For example, few named streets still exist in Managua, largely because of the haphazard reconstruction after the 1972 earthquake that destroyed much of the city's downtown area. People give directions with maddening imprecision. What should be a ten-minute drive to an appointment easily turns into thirty, as a visitor wanders with guidance like "Go a half a block toward the lake and two blocks to the north"—starting from nowhere in particular.

One morning, as I struggled with such directions while trying to reach a government office, Javier Talavera offered to help me.

He was standing on a corner, wearing a pale yellow Lacoste shirt and khaki slacks. He looked like he belonged in an office. In fact, he did. An educated, articulate man, trained in business administration, Talavera, thirty-two, had





been out of work for five months. His family was living on his wife's income as a teacher—about \$32 a week. He had been musing over his prospects when we met.

He laughed with amazing good nature when I asked if he, his wife, and their two children could live on his wife's modest salary. "We have nothing in the house," he said. "Some days we have breakfast. Some days we don't. Many professionals like me can't find work. They are in the streets. Businessmen, sociologists, statisticians. In my church there are people who have been without work for two years."

Talavera is frustrated and puzzled by the changes in his country. He sees the market boom, and yet there is no room in it for him.

"It's like living in a mirage," he said. "There is everything, including food. But people can't buy it."

The Talavera family are among the Nicaraguans who are sinking fast. I spoke with dozens, from various classes and educational backgrounds. They see friends and family drowning with

them, and no lifeboats in sight. A survey last fall by a private think tank found that 54 percent of those questioned had less money to spend than they had had a year before.

The Sandinistas—who have become the sometimes loyal, sometimes feisty opposition—are uncertain how to respond. Party leaders are locked in their deepest identity crisis since the downfall of Anastasio Somoza, in 1979. With the unexpected loss of power, much of the party structure collapsed. Paid staffers were laid off, party offices in the countryside were shut down, and the strong Sandinista presence in city neighborhoods steadily dissipated.

In the midst of the chaos, Sandinista leaders are at war with one another, sending out contradictory signals to the party faithful. New coalitions align and old ones divide, while analysts fill newspapers and radio with speculation about who is doing what to whom, who is rising and who is falling. Meanwhile, the government is excelling at the art of compromise, crafting deals with various Sandinista legislative and labor blocs

as economic and political crises arise.

No one at the center of the party has been more chameleonlike than General Humberto Ortega Saavedra, the former Defense Minister and the brother of ex-President Daniel Ortega Saavedra. Chamorro angered many of her supporters (Gilberto Cuadra among them), and the U.S. government, when, as a conciliatory measure, she chose to keep the general on as head of the army, a post he still holds.

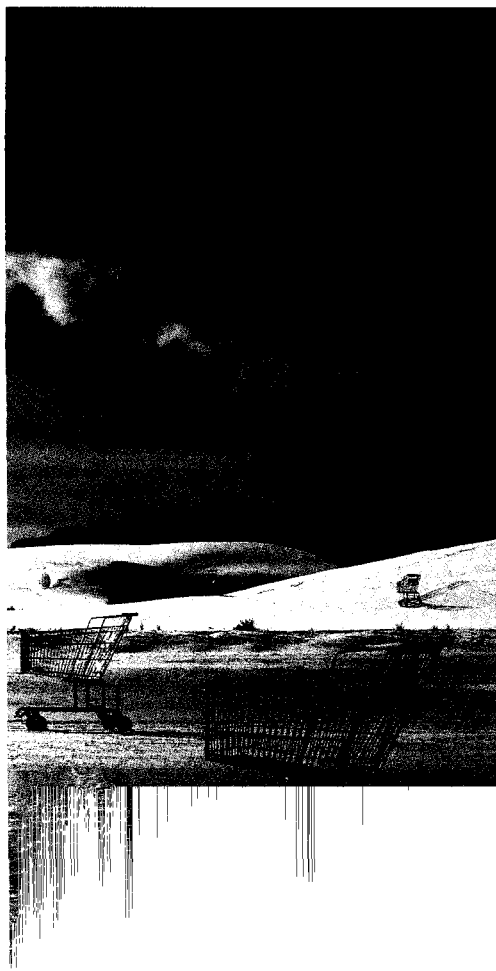
In the early days of the revolution Humberto Ortega was one of those who outlined the party's alienation from the country's middle and upper classes. "We are against the bourgeoisie," he told army and militia officers in 1981. "We are guided by the scientific doctrine of the revolution, by Marxism-Leninism."

But now, even as his brother continues to spout populist and often angry rhetoric, the general seems to have evolved. After eleven years, a war, and a political and economic collapse, his views appear to have progressed in a way that offers compelling insight into

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the flux at the Sandinista core. Wooing a visiting conservative German Cabinet Minister last February, Humberto Ortega revealed to a small audience a sea change in his thinking. "Socialism always wanted to distribute too much," he said. "Capitalism and liberal, free-market economies can much better develop the productive forces of a country. . . . The demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat has outlived itself. Lenin and Marx are dead."

Lenin and Marx, then, have been replaced by strong new voices within the party. They are calling for the comandantes of the past to be replaced by democratic leaders who can offer an attractive alternative to the current government, one that combines economic growth with protection for the poor.

To compete, the Sandinistas must win back the hundreds of thousands of voters who punished them in 1990 for piloting the economy into a crash. They are farmers in starving rural pueblos and dwellers in starving urban shantytowns and people like Angela, the prostitute.

Moments after dropping Angela off in front of the hotel I thought of another question. But business was brisk that night, and by the time I returned, she was already back at work. The free market was going her way.

Another Nicaraguan irony. She could find no other work, but at least this government, whose policies kept her in the streets, made sure that she could conduct business there in peace.

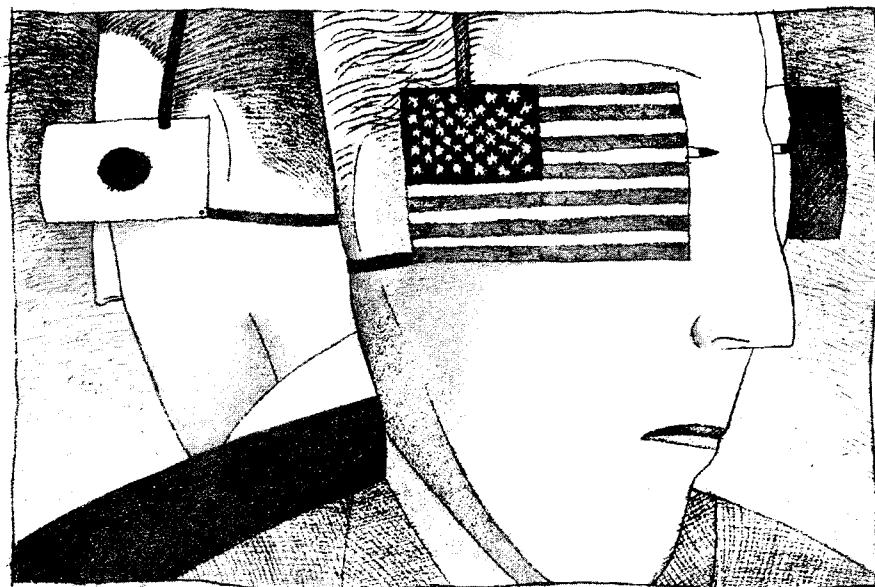
—David Schrieberg

one who has considered American history can tick off cases in which the country rationalized what now seems like blatantly racist behavior. Even a glance at the past century of U.S.-Japanese interactions shows a recurring racist theme. The most obvious instance was during the Second World War, when Japanese-Americans were interned on the assumption that they were, in effect, genetically disloyal.

On the better-safe-than-sorry principle, many Americans have apparently concluded that it's important to sound the alarm about latent racism even in cases, such as the sale of a baseball team, that have no obvious racial content. The motives behind this self-critical reaction are understandable and well-meaning. Like many Americans, I have a similar reflex when it comes to black-white relations within this country. (When I see a white contestant screw up on *Jeopardy*, I know that he has embarrassed only himself. The pressure on black contestants is much greater.) But in dealings between the United States and Japan, the insistent search for racial motives is having the opposite of its intended effect. By asserting again and again that U.S.-Japanese frictions are fundamentally racial, liberal-minded America makes it harder to deal with resolvable problems and increases the risk that outright racial showdowns will occur.

LET'S GO BACK to baseball. Japan, of course, has a professional baseball system of its own. Most of the teams are owned by big corporations, for which they serve as a season-long corporate-advertising medium. The Yakult Swallows, for example, are owned by the Yakult prepared-foods company. (Since Yakult makes a number of popular drinkable yogurt products, the name could be an elaborate English-language pun.) The first time I heard of the team called the Nippon Ham Fighters, I wondered if "ham fighting" was some kind of martial art. In fact the Fighters merely bear the name of their owners, the Nippon Ham company. If the same system were in effect in America, teams would be known as the Anheuser-Busch Cardinals, the Microsoft Mariners, and the CNN Braves.

It would be impossible for a Japanese team to be known as the Lockheed Fighters or the Coca-Cola Swal-



JAPAN

Nationalism, Not Racism

The argument that frictions between the United States and Japan are essentially racial in character is not only wrong but dangerous

WHILE I WAS driving to the airport for a recent trip to Japan, I heard the announcer on a sports-talk station discussing the sale of the Seattle Mariners to the Japanese family that owns Nintendo. If Ameri-

can baseball had said no to the sale, he argued, the explanation would have been one of only two possible things: terminal stupidity or "outright racism."

He was probably right about the stupidity. It is generally shrewd for businesses to draw in as much capital as they can—especially in an industry like baseball, since there is no risk that a foreign-owned team, unlike a factory, will be moved overseas. Indeed, many in Seattle pointed out that selling the team to Japanese owners was probably the only way to keep it in town.

But I wonder about the insistence on racism, which has run through many other commentaries on the United States' current problems with Japan. Every American knows that race is this country's central social problem. Any-

lows, though: the rules and practices of Japanese baseball prevent non-Japanese owners from buying a controlling interest in any of the teams. The rules of Japanese baseball also affect the rosters. No team may put more than two non-Japanese players on the field. This policy has an obvious racial effect. A few of the foreign players have been Korean or Taiwanese, but the vast majority are black, white, or Hispanic Americans. Without the rule, foreign players would dominate the lineup. With the rule, the racial tone of the teams remains Japanese.

My point is not to complain that Japanese baseball is "closed" or "racist." For reasons of their own, the Japanese leagues have established a system with which the Japanese public seems content. The disadvantages of the exclusionary policies are obvious. The two-foreigner limit, like any other kind of protectionism, depresses the level of performance. But the limits also bring advantages—notably the chance for Japanese athletes to have careers as baseball stars. It is as if the U.S. hockey teams decided to secede from the National Hockey League, form their own league, and hold down the number of Finns, Russians, and even Canadians who were allowed to play. The resulting teams would be much worse, but more Americans could grow up to play professional hockey than can now.

The world is full of limitations and exclusions that, like the constraints on Japanese baseball, have differential racial effects but that we discuss without constantly calling them "racist." Korea makes it almost impossible for non-Koreans to buy land in Korea. Every country has immigration laws, which in most cases are designed to keep the local ethnic mix unchanged. Sometime in the next year or two the Japanese space agency will probably launch the H-2 rocket, which is usually described in the Japanese press as being the first rocket "entirely free of foreign components." This means that it is free of products made by people who are not ethnically Japanese.

We can discuss these and other restrictive policies without harping on racism because we know that manageable explanations are at hand. The most important is nationalism, which in practice often has racial effects but which is seen, unlike racism, as being a generally legitimate im-

pulse. The Swedish government generally provides free university tuition to Swedish citizens. In practice this policy excludes most nonwhites, but no one talks about it as being fundamentally racist.

In many countries the distinction between "nation" and "race" seems elusive. South Korea's name for itself is Dae Han Min Guk. This literally means "Country of the Great Korean People," but the word for people (*min*) has an ethnic connotation, like the German *Volk*. Japan famously defines itself as being simultaneously one nation and one race. Although the United States, Canada, and Australia have historically been mainly white societies, they differ from the rest of the world in embracing, in principle, the complete separation of ethnicity from nationalism. In principle, their ethnic makeup can constantly change without jeopardizing their national identity.

It should therefore be much easier for Americans than for Japanese or Finns to keep national issues separate from racial ones. When an issue *can* be explained in national rather than racial terms, we should be able to recognize the distinction—and to see the advantages of keeping the discussion on the plane of nationalism. Conflicts of national interest may not be pleasant, but they are normal, and they can be resolved. A whole network of international diplomacy exists to smooth them out. Once a conflict is defined as being purely racial, we're at a dead end.

In the case of the Seattle controversy, there's no need to reach for racial interpretations. Indeed, "outright racism" can't possibly explain the resistance to Nintendo. If someone of the same race as the Nintendo owners but of U.S. nationality had bought the team, it is hard to imagine that anyone would have complained. (Think, for instance, of Senator Daniel Inouye or Representative Robert Matsui.) Right or wrong, the anti-Nintendo position could be stated in purely national terms. American baseball has resisted foreign ownership of major-league teams—except in Canada, where two are actually based. Why should it be considered "racist" for extending this policy to buyers from a country that flatly bans foreign control of its own teams?

In most other U.S.-Japanese frictions national rather than racial explanations will, similarly, suffice. For example,

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foreign investment in America: newspaper articles frequently point out that British and (until recently) Dutch firms have larger investments in the United States than Japanese ones do. Isn't it racist to focus so much attention on the Japanese? Maybe, but it might also be because the rate of *new* investment from Japan during most of the late 1980s was much higher than that from anywhere else; the British- and Dutch-owned companies, unlike the Japanese-owned firms, are managed mainly by Americans, and in that sense no longer seemed foreign; and Britain and Holland themselves are quite open to U.S. investment.

As Dennis Encarnation, of the Harvard Business School, points out in his new book, *Rivals Beyond Trade*, U.S. firms invest freely in Europe, as European firms do in America, but neither European nor U.S. firms have been able to invest significant amounts in Japan. U.S.-based firms own a larger share of the British and Dutch economies than either of these countries' firms own of the American. Even though the British and Dutch economies together are much smaller than Japan's, American ownership of British and Dutch firms is worth more, in absolute terms, than American ownership in Japan. Depending on how you count it, Japan's ownership in the United States is at least five times as great as U.S. ownership in Japan. It is possible that "outright racism" lies behind the focus on Japanese investment, but I would bet that if the Germans, French, Italians, or Poles had a five-to-one imbalance with the United States, we would be focusing on them. Canadians in the 1970s, like the French in the 1960s, complained lustily about the American presence in their economy, without any obvious racial motive.

What about the emphasis on Japanese exports to America? It is true that the United States has often been the world's largest exporter, and that Germany has during several years had a proportionately larger trade surplus than Japan. But, as an increasing body of research has shown, Japan's economic structure is in fundamental ways different from any other advanced country's. Although Japan imports more manufactured goods than it used to, it still imports dramatically less than European and North American nations do. The difference is clearest and most sig-

nificant (as Edward Lincoln, of the Brookings Institution, has extensively demonstrated) in a category called intra-industry trade. Improbable as this may sound, developed countries often buy the same sorts of products that they sell. For instance, the United States is both a leading importer and a leading exporter of office machines. Japan engages in very little intra-industry trade. If its own companies are technically capable of making a product, it rarely buys from anyone else. If the German economy did the same thing, I suspect it would encounter the same complaints.

Without working down the whole list of U.S.-Japanese problems, it seems that straightforward economic and national forces are sufficient to explain where the two countries disagree. Racial difference, in contrast, is not sufficient. As far as most Americans are concerned, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan are in the same racial group. In the 1988 presidential campaign Japan and Korea were often mentioned in the same breath as economic challenges. At the time, both had rapidly rising trade surpluses with the United States. Since then Korea's surplus has fallen drastically, and last year it actually had a deficit with the United States (and a huge deficit with Japan). In this year's campaign the Democratic candidates have talked about Japan and Germany instead. If race rather than economics were the main factor, Korea would have stayed on the list. Korea has its own list of economic grievances relative to Japan, longer and more heartfelt than America's. But the main themes are the same. Korea's attitude toward Japan is complex, like Ireland's toward England, but the feelings can't exactly be called racist, since anthropologically the two cultures are so close.

IT WOULD BE foolish to rule out racial consciousness as a factor in U.S.-Japanese relations, considering the role race plays in each country's domestic politics and in the relations between the two. Even if racism is not the intention, it can be an overtone or a result.

In balancing racial and nonracial interpretations, therefore, we return to a question of intellectual style. Should we sniff out and emphasize any possibility of racial motive? Or should we stick to the demonstrable—and resolvable—differences in economic policy

and national interest? Everything I have seen of life suggests that we should try to stay with the solvable problems and provable facts. Ask any marriage counselor, business negotiator, or diplomat.

Moreover, we trivialize our most serious social problem and our most potent political term when we throw around charges of racism carelessly. If we've used the word to describe "Buy American" proposals or the latest trade bill moving through Congress, we don't have much left with which to condemn real bigotry. This spring Senator Ernest Hollings made a gruesome joke about "testing" the atomic bomb on Japan. Some Asian-Americans and Asians in America have been victims of racially motivated attacks. Such events are disgusting, but the case against them is weakened if it is squandered on Nintendo and the Mariners.

One step in the right direction would be to recognize the damage that the term "Japan-bashing" does. British friends tell me that the term is derived from "Paki-bashing"—assaults on Pakistanis in England. Whatever its origin, it clearly carries a connotation of bigotry, but it is now used as a matter of course. This spring, to choose one example from hundreds, a routine headline in *USA Today* read, "JAPAN BASHING ASIDE, TOYOTA MARKET SHARE RISES." Use of the term has become comparable to calling every disagreement with Israeli government policy "anti-Semitism." Some are, some aren't—and by erasing the distinction between disagreement and bigotry we imply that there is one seamless mass of U.S.-Japanese friction, which at its core is an ethnic clash.

I have been in Japan for two weeks as I write. To be here is to see every moment the endless human variations that make up "the Japanese." Some Japanese people like Nintendo and its owners. Some don't. Some sympathize with the complaints outsiders make about their business practices. Others bristle. Despite decades of nationalistic propaganda, most Japanese seem to recognize the difference between their system—the interleaved approach to education and production that demands so much of individuals and produces so much for the nation—and their racial identity. We should recognize the difference too.

—James Fallows

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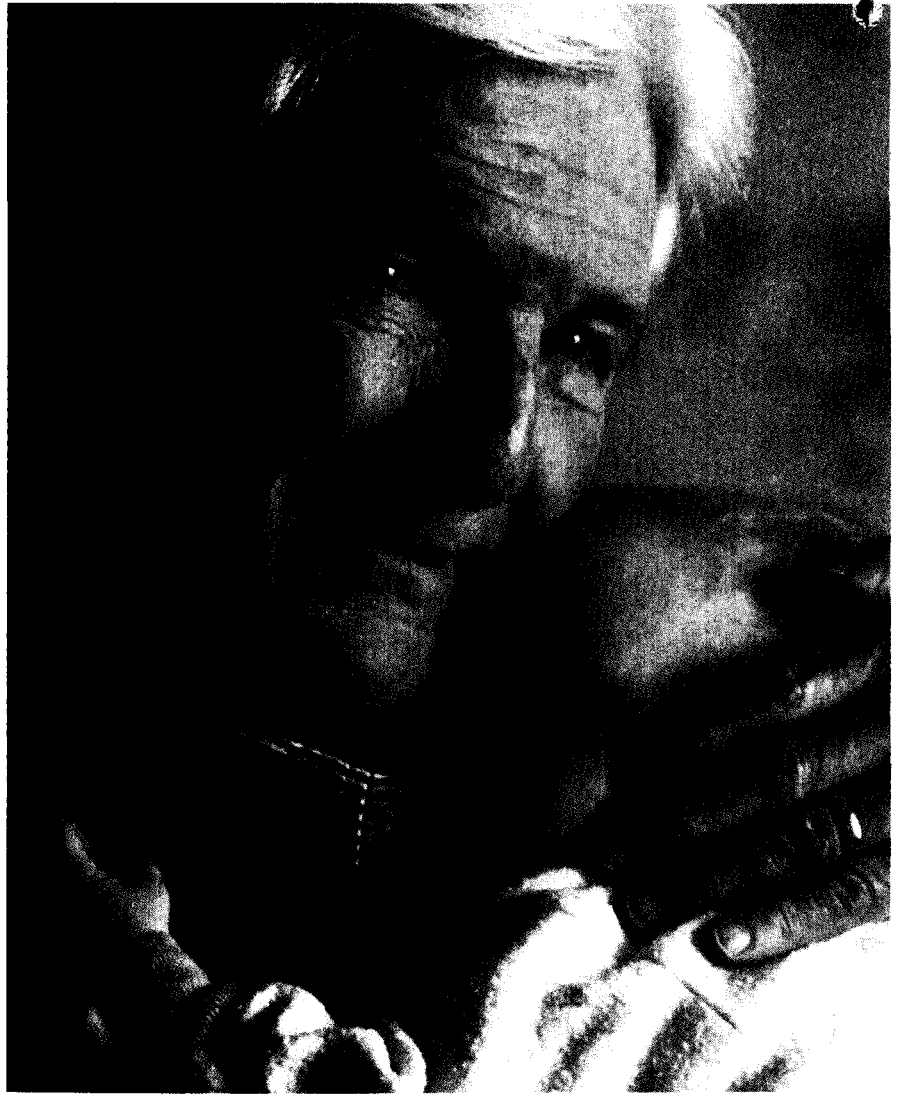
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The real meaning of the 1992 election

THE SUBURBAN CENTURY BEGINS

BY WILLIAM SCHNEIDER

THE UNITED STATES IS A NATION OF SUBURBS. THE 1990 CENSUS MAKES IT OFFICIAL. Nearly half the country's population now lives in suburbs, up from a quarter in 1950 and a third in 1960. This year will see the first presidential election in which a majority of the voters will in all likelihood be subur-

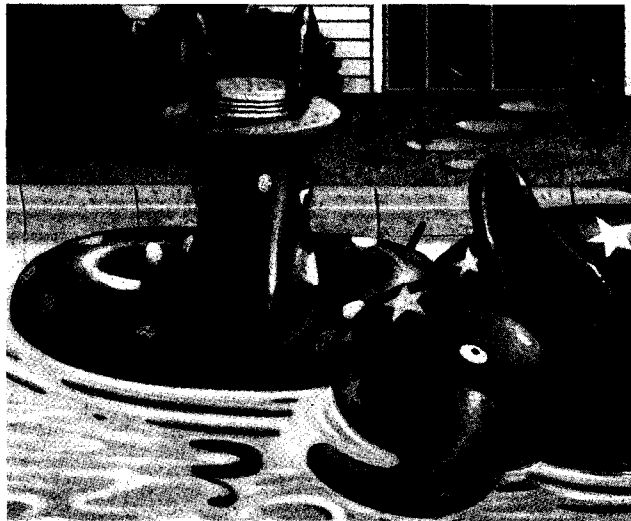
banites—the first election of the suburban century.

That explains the obsessive focus on the middle class in the 1992 campaign. The middle class is who lives in the suburbs. The word that best describes the political identity of the middle class is “taxpayers.” Democrats have been talking about “the forgotten middle class,” and for good reason. For the past twenty-five years the Democrats have forgotten the middle class. And they have paid dearly.

They can't afford to do that anymore. The third century of American history is shaping up as the suburban century. Until 1920 most Americans lived in rural areas. By 1960 the country was a third urban, a third rural, and a third suburban. That balance didn't last long, however. By 1990 the urban population had slipped to 31 percent and the rural population was down to less than a quarter. We are now a suburban nation with an urban fringe and a rural fringe.

The first century of American life was dominated by the rural myth: the sturdy and self-reliant Jeffersonian farmer. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Americans were getting off the farms as fast as they could, to escape the hardship and brutality of rural life. How could you keep them down on the farm after they'd seen Kansas City?

Most of the twentieth century has been dominated by the urban myth: the melting pot; New York, New York; the cities as the nation's great engines of prosperity and



culture. All the while, however, Americans have been getting out of the cities as soon as they can afford to buy a house and a car. They want to escape the crowding and dangers of urban life. But there is more to it than escape. As Kenneth T. Jackson argues in *Crabgrass Frontier*, a history of suburbanization in the United States, the pull factors (cheap housing and the ideal of a suburban “dream house”) have been as important as the push factors

(population growth and racial prejudice).

The 1990 Census tells the story of the explosive growth of suburbs. That year fourteen states had a majority suburban population, including six of the ten most populous states (California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Florida, and New Jersey).

Five of the nation's ten fastest-growing counties were majority suburban; two others had considerable suburban development. Three were outside Atlanta. Nineteen of the nation's twenty-five fastest-growing “cities” were really suburbs. They included the Los Angeles-area suburbs of Moreno Valley, Rancho Cucamonga, and Irvine; the Phoenix suburbs of Mesa, Scottsdale, and Glendale; and the Dallas suburbs of Arlington, Mesquite, and Plano.

Suburban growth is not likely to end anytime soon. According to the polls, 43 percent of Boston residents, 48 percent of people who live in Los Angeles, and 60 percent of those who live in New York City say they would leave the city if they could. When the Gallup Poll asked

In 1990 five of the nation's ten fastest-growing counties were majority suburban; two others had considerable suburban development. Nineteen of the twenty-five fastest-growing "cities" were really suburbs.

culture, where television comedies like *Roseanne* and *The Simpsons* portray the harsh realities of suburban life—unemployment, dysfunctional families, and, above all, stress.

Suburban stress has not produced any large-scale countermovement back to the cities or out to the countryside, however. Instead, the larger suburbs have become what the author Joel Garreau calls "edge cities"—places where jobs have migrated to follow the population. These, in turn, have spawned more-distant suburbs of their own—"exurbs." The prevailing life-style in all these places remains distinctively suburban, meaning home-owning, homogeneous, and largely white.

The prevailing imperative of suburban life is security—both economic and physical. When I interviewed Dan Walters, a columnist for the *Sacramento Bee* and one of the keenest observers of California politics, he explained to me how the culture and life-style of the suburbs work to undermine political consensus.

"The theory of California," Walters explained, "is, 'I bought this house. It's mine. This is my little preserve.' The first thing the homeowner would do was put up a six-foot fence around his entire house. Then the developers started putting in the fences themselves.

"The next step after that was to put a fence around the entire development and put a guard at the gate. The development became a walled community. These walled communities created their own governmental structures. They might be private structures, like homeowners' associations, that exercised government-like powers. But in

Americans in 1989 what kind of place they would like to live in, only 19 percent said a city.

Is there a suburban myth? Sure there is. It has been a staple of American popular culture since the 1950s, from television shows like *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* and *Leave It to Beaver* to movies like *E.T.* The suburban myth was challenged in high-brow culture as soon as it emerged, however, in books like David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (which criticized suburbia's "other-directedness") and William H. Whyte Jr.'s *The Organization Man* (which called it "group-mindedness"). The debunking of the suburban myth has now reached American popular

some cases they actually created public entities that served as private guardians."

Walters offered the following theory: "Personal security in a time of economic and social uncertainty is a very salable commodity. Developers are not selling security but a sense of security." The result, in his view, was "the loss of a sense of common purpose" in California. "We don't have a social consensus," he said, "so we cannot achieve a political consensus. All politics does is implement the social consensus."

The Declining Urban Sector

IN THE 1890S THE SOCIAL CONSENSUS BROKE DOWN IN this country when declining rural areas rose up in rebellion against urban America. The Populists spoke for the old rural America that was being displaced economically and culturally by immigration and the rise of great cities. The countryside was driven to radical extremes by economic pressure and the loss of political influence. In the election of 1896 the Democrats fused with the Populists and nominated William Jennings Bryan, shutting themselves out of presidential politics for most of the next thirty-six years.

The social consensus is breaking down again in the 1990s. Urban America is facing extreme economic pressure and the loss of political influence. The cities feel neglected, and with good reason: they are the declining sector of American life. Just as the Populists of the 1890s exalted the rural myth, urban leaders of the 1990s are trying to glorify the urban myth.

In 1990 the mayors of thirty-five of the nation's big cities held an "urban summit" in New York City. They published a position paper pleading the case that their urban agenda was, as the title suggested, "In the National Interest." "Urban centers are the focus of national vitality in trade, manufacturing, finance, law and communications," the mayors insisted. "American culture is profoundly affected by the artistic and intellectual communities that thrive in the compressed space of cities." Mayor Tom Bradley, of Los Angeles, warned, "If we do not save our cities, we shall not save this nation."

The mayors wanted to designate the 1990s "The Decade of the City." They called for "a public education campaign around the theme of why cities are essential." Finally, however, they gave in. They said "city" needs to be redefined "to include the entire urban region as a community." If you can't beat the suburbs, join them.

Like the Populists before them, today's urban activists react with rage and frustration to the neglect of their agenda. Jesse Jackson grumbles that the Democratic Party is turning away from its base. Last year he complained about "an unholy alliance between the two parties—leaving the electorate with two names but one party, one set of assumptions, and no options."

Jackson's mission in 1984 and 1988 was to rally the de-

clining urban sector in a populist protest movement. But this year Jackson decided not to run—much to the relief of Democratic strategists, who dreaded the spectacle of Jackson's again extorting concessions from the party's nominee. They fear that Jackson is as out of step with suburban America today as Bryan was with urban America in the 1890s.

When the U.S. Conference of Mayors met in Washington, last January, the Democratic mayors decided not to rally around a presidential candidate. Mayor Raymond L. Flynn, of Boston, the conference president, complained that none of the major contenders performed strongly enough on the urban agenda. "I want a little fire in the belly here for America's cities," Flynn told *The New York Times*. "There's still this hesitancy among the candidates. . . . We want somebody who's really going to have a feeling of commitment to problems like homelessness and AIDS."

Actually, one Democratic candidate did draw a positive response from the mayors—Larry Agran, the former mayor of Irvine, California. Agran was regarded, of course, as a long shot for the nomination. The mayors' conference was one of the few candidate forums that included him. What he promised was \$25 billion in direct, no-strings-attached aid to cities, paid for by a gigantic cut in military spending. Delighted, the mayors said he was the only candidate who understood the needs of urban America.

The mayors and other liberal activists worry that the Democrats are moving toward a suburban agenda. They are right. The mayors know that problems like poverty, homelessness, and AIDS can't be solved with middle-class tax cuts and entitlement programs. Even robust economic growth doesn't do the cities much good, as the country discovered in the 1980s. What the cities need is targeted resources. But that's exactly what Democrats are afraid of—redistributive programs that take resources from the suburbs to pay for the problems of the cities. That sounds like the Great Society programs that got the Democrats in trouble with the suburban middle class in the 1960s. But isn't it "in the national interest" to bail out the cities? The suburbs have given their answer: walled communities.

Nowhere has the gap between city and suburb been more dramatically demonstrated than in the notorious not-guilty verdict in the trial of four Los Angeles police officers last April. The trial, which took place in Simi Valley, an overwhelmingly white suburb, produced an incomprehensible verdict. The reaction in the inner city of Los Angeles was one of incomprehensible violence.

The Republicans' Suburban Edge

PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS THESE DAYS IS A RACE BETWEEN Democratic cities and Republican suburbs to see who can produce bigger margins. The suburbs are winning.

In 1960 urban areas cast 33 percent of the national vote, 20 percent Democratic and 13 percent Republican.

So the Democrats came out of the cities with a seven-point lead. In 1988 the urban vote was down to 29 percent of the total. It split 18 percent for the Democrats and 11 percent for the Republicans. That's still a seven-point lead. Thus, from 1960 to 1988 two things happened to the urban vote: it became smaller, and it became more Democratic. As a result, the Democrats' lead coming out of the cities held constant.

Over the same period the rural vote became smaller and more Republican. So the Republican lead coming out of the countryside also stayed about the same (a two-point lead in 1960, a three-point lead in 1988).

What happened to the suburban vote from 1960 to 1988 was quite different. While the suburbs grew larger, they also became more Republican. In 1960 the suburbs generated a third of the national vote. The suburban third divided 18 percent for the Republicans and 15 percent for the Democrats. So the Republican Party came out of the suburbs that year with a three-point lead. In 1988 the suburbs accounted for 48 percent of the vote. And that vote split 28–20 for the Republicans. Thus they came out of the suburbs with an eight-point lead in 1988—enough to cancel out the Democrats' lead in the cities. The suburbs had arrived, politically.

The suburbs are growing larger faster than the cities are becoming more Democratic. That has tipped the balance to the Republicans in presidential elections in a number of key states.

Illinois is a case in point. In 1960 Chicago cast 35 percent of the Illinois presidential vote. With a little help from Richard J. Daley's machine, the city voted 63 percent Democratic that year. In 1988 Chicago's vote was down to 23 percent of the Illinois total. With no apparent help from the Daley machine, the city voted 69 percent Democratic.

At the same time, the suburban vote outside Chicago became slightly more Republican, moving from 60 percent for Nixon in 1960 to 62 percent for Bush in 1988. The number of voters in the suburbs grew enormously, however. The suburbs accounted for 26 percent of the Illinois vote in 1960—a quarter less than Chicago. They cast 38 percent of the Illinois vote in 1988—two thirds more than Chicago.

Presidential politics these days is a race between

Democratic cities and Republican suburbs. The suburbs are winning. They are growing larger faster than the cities are becoming Democratic.

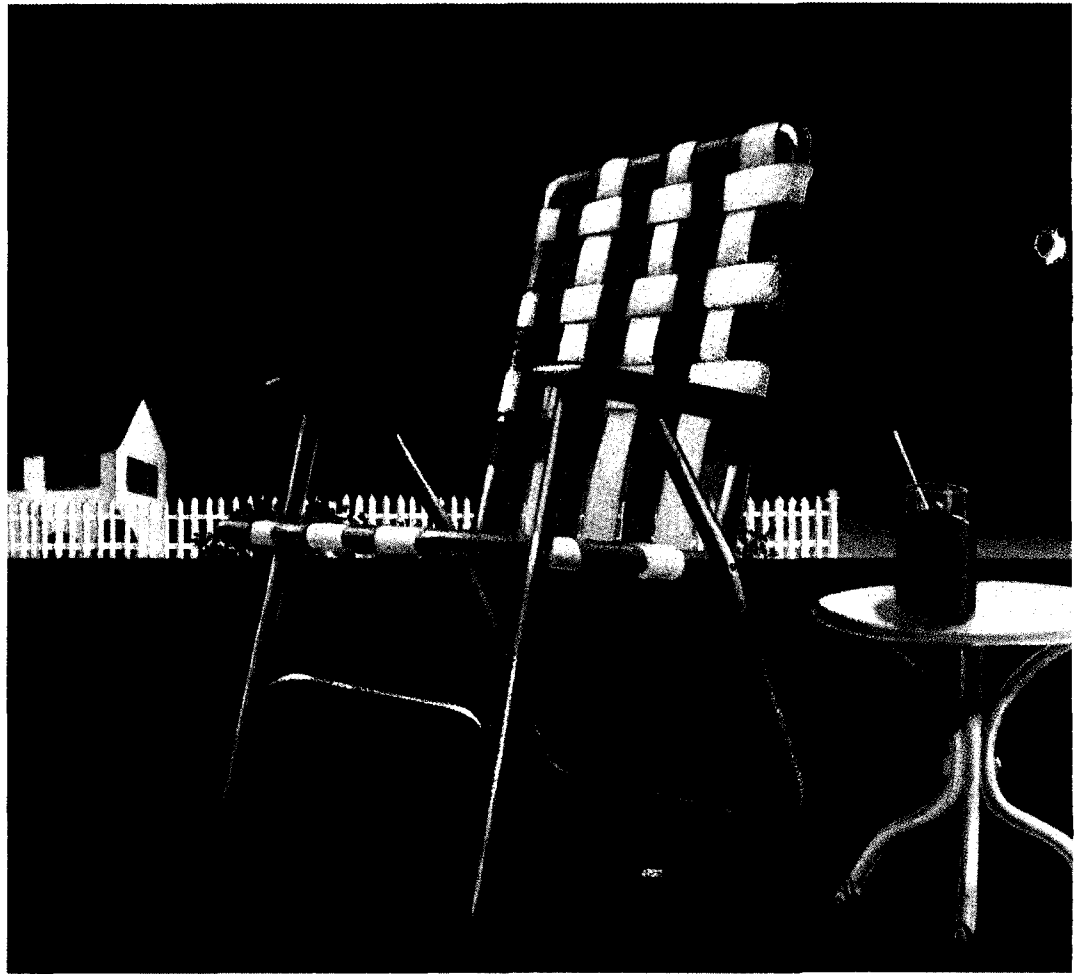
In 1960 the Democrats came out of Chicago with a 456,000-vote lead for President. The Republicans came out of the suburbs 254,000 votes ahead. Illinois went Democratic. In 1988 the Democrats came out of a smaller but more Democratic Chicago with a 420,000-vote lead. But the Republican margin was 423,000 votes in the suburbs. Illinois went Republican.

In 1960 Detroit cast 22 percent of the Michigan vote. Seventy-one percent of those votes went Democratic. Kennedy got a 312,000-vote lead out of Detroit. The Detroit suburbs also went Democratic that year, by 84,000 votes. Michigan ended up in the Democratic column.

By 1988 Detroit voted a whopping 85 percent Democratic. But the city was down to eight percent of the Michigan vote. It gave Michael S. Dukakis a 217,000-vote lead. Detroit's suburbs were now voting 60 percent Republican. And they accounted for a third of the Michigan vote. The suburbs gave Bush a 230,000-vote lead. Michigan went Republican.

In 1960 Los Angeles County had two and a half times as many voters as the five suburban counties of southern California. But the Republican lead in the suburban counties (138,000 votes) was already large enough to offset the Democratic lead in Los Angeles County (21,000 votes). By 1988 L.A. County and the southern California suburbs were casting the same number of votes. The Democrats' lead of 133,000 votes in L.A. County was dwarfed by the Republicans' lead of 717,000 votes in the suburbs. A state that had gone Republican by 36,000 votes in 1960 went Republican by 353,000 votes in 1988.

How bad has it gotten for Democrats? Bush's margin in Ohio (477,000 votes) was far larger than his total vote in Cleveland (34,000 votes). His margin in Michigan (290,000) was greater than his total vote in Detroit (44,000). Ditto for Georgia and Atlanta. And for Louisiana and New Orleans. The same was very nearly true for Maryland and Baltimore and for California and Los Angeles. Bush's margin in Missouri (83,000 votes) was about the same as the total number of votes he got in St. Louis and Kansas City together (85,000).



In other words, Bush could have carried most of these states without getting a single vote in their largest cities. Republicans can afford to ignore the cities. But the Democrats, like many urban residents, have to worry about becoming trapped in them—exactly the way the Democrats got trapped in rural America in the 1890s.

The Suburban View of Government

DEMOCRATS HAVE NOT DONE BADLY AMONG suburban voters in elections below the presidential level. California, for instance, is a heavily suburban state that has voted for the Democratic ticket only once since Harry Truman (the 1964 LBJ landslide), but Democrats have won ten out of twenty-four elections for governor and senator since 1952, have held a majority of California's seats in the House of Representatives since 1958, and have controlled both houses of the state legislature since 1974.

Across the country suburban voters usually vote more Democratic in state elections than in presidential elections. The difference averages between five and eight points in nonsouthern states like California, Illinois, and Michigan. Among suburban voters in southern states like Texas and Florida, Democratic candidates for governor



and senator typically do 15 to 25 points better than Democratic presidential candidates.

In 1990 a hundred and seventy congressional districts had majority suburban populations (according to data in the 1980 Census). That was substantially more than the number of majority urban (ninety-eight) or majority rural (eighty-eight) districts. (The remaining seventy-nine districts were "mixed.") Democrats represented more than 80 percent of the urban districts, almost 60 percent of the rural districts, and a bare 50 percent of the suburban districts. The Democrats' ability to sustain a majority in the House of Representatives depends on the party's continuing competitiveness in the suburbs.

And that, in turn, depends on the Democrats' ability to understand the suburban view of government. Suburbanization means the privatization of American life and culture. To move to the suburbs is to express a preference for the private over the public. The architects Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk offer this disdainful characterization:

The classic suburb is less a community than an agglomeration of houses, shops, and offices connected to one another by cars, not by the fabric of human life. . . . The structure of the suburb tends to confine people to their houses and cars; it discourages strolling, walking, min-

gling with neighbors. The suburb is the last word in privatization, perhaps even its lethal consummation, and it spells the end of authentic civic life.

There is a reason why people want to be confined to their houses and their cars. They want a secure and controlled environment. Suburban commuters show a determined preference for private over public transportation. Automobiles may not be efficient, but they give people a sense of security and control. With a car you can go anywhere you want, anytime you want, in the comfort of your own private space.

Entertainment has also been privatized. Suburbanites watch cable television and rent videos. They can watch anything they want, anytime they want, in the comfort of their own private space. People have control over what they see—remote control. And they don't have to put up with the insecurity and disorder of public spaces. Historically, enjoying public spaces was one of the reasons people lived in cities.

Even public activities like shopping have been privatized. The difference between a mall and a downtown is that a mall is a private space, a secure environment. Young people can hang out there. Old people can "mall walk" for exercise. Those are difficult and dangerous things to do in uncontrolled public spaces. Even the streets of a suburb are not really public areas. Suburban houses have decks, which protrude into private back yards. In the great American suburb there are no front porches.

Suburbanites' preference for the private applies to government as well. Suburban voters buy "private" government—good schools and safe streets for the people who live there. They control their local government, including taxes, spending, schools, and police.

There are rich suburbs (Fairfax County, Virginia) and poor suburbs (Chelsea, Massachusetts); black suburbs (Prince Georges County, Maryland) and Hispanic suburbs (Hialeah, Florida); liberal suburbs (Marin County, California) and conservative suburbs (Orange County, California). Can suburban voters, then, be said to have a defining characteristic? Yes: suburban voters are predominantly property owners. And that makes them highly tax-sensitive.

A major reason people move out to the suburbs is simply to be able to buy their own government. These people resent it when politicians take their money and use it to solve other people's problems, especially when they don't believe that government can actually solve those problems. Two streams of opinion seem to be feeding the anti-government consensus as American politics enters the suburban era. One is resistance to taxes, which is strongest among middle-class suburban voters. The other is cynicism about government, which is strongest among the urban poor and the poorly educated.

Upscale voters are the most likely to say that government has too much power and influence, that taxes should be kept low, and that people should solve their problems for themselves. That's the "elitist" suburban view. Down-

A major reason people move out to the suburbs is simply to be able to buy their own government. These people resent it when politicians take their money and use it to solve other people's problems.

should do has been canceled out by the more constricted view of what government *can* do. No one wants to give politicians more money to spend, even if the nation's problems are becoming more serious.

The last time the nation was in this kind of anti-political frenzy was during the Progressive era, in the early decades of this century. Progressives, however, were anti-political but pro-government. The reforms of that era were aimed at curbing the power of political parties by expanding what Progressives saw as the rational, managerial authority of government (for example, having cities run by professional city managers instead of politicians). They used the attack on politics to justify an essentially liberal agenda: making government more professional.

Today the attack on politics serves an essentially conservative agenda: taking government out of the hands of a professional political elite and making it more responsive to the people. How? By limiting terms, limiting pay, limiting spending, and limiting taxes. In the suburban era, unlike the Progressive era, opposition to politics and opposition to government go hand in hand.

Spend Broadly, Tax Narrowly

THE SUBURBANIZATION OF THE ELECTORATE raises a big problem for the Democrats: How can they sell activist government to a constituency that is hostile to government? The answer is, they have to learn how to talk about taxes and spending in ways palatable to the middle class. There are

scale voters express doubts about what government *can* do. They are the most likely to say that public officials don't know what they are doing, that most of them are crooks, that they don't pay attention to what people think, that government is run by a few big interests, and that you can't trust the government to do what is right. That's the cynical, "populist" view. Put the two together and you have a powerful, broad-based, anti-government, anti-tax coalition.

Polls show that people want government to do more about education, the environment, the infrastructure, and health care. But they trust it less than ever. The more expansive view of what government

two lessons the Democrats should have learned by now.

One is that the only social programs that are politically secure are those that benefit everybody. Medicare, for example, is the principal enduring legacy of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Like Social Security, Medicare helps everybody, not just those in greatest financial need. The Democrats found it impossible to sustain support for LBJ's War on Poverty, however, precisely because it was not a universal entitlement. It was targeted at the poor.

Consider two kinds of government spending. Public-works spending is salable to middle-class voters. Social-welfare spending is not. Public-works spending involves benefits that are available to everyone and that people cannot provide for themselves—things like good schools, fast highways, safe streets, and a clean environment.

Social-welfare spending is targeted by need. It helps disadvantaged people get things that others are able to provide for themselves, like housing, food, and medical care. That is fine with middle-class voters, as long as they are persuaded that the benefits are going to the "truly needy" and that no one is taking advantage of the system. But middle-class voters tend to be suspicious of programs aimed at creating social change rather than providing public services.

Entitlement programs are like public works. By definition, entitlements are not based on need. People are entitled to a benefit because they belong to a certain category, and it is a category anyone can belong to—the elderly, children, veterans, disabled persons (everyone was once a child, everyone expects to get old, and everyone can join the service or become disabled). True, entitlement programs are wasteful, expensive, and inefficient ways to bring about social change. But that is not their purpose. Entitlement programs, like Social Security, are only incidentally redistributive. In effect, middle-class voters are bribed to support them because they get benefits too.

It is worth remembering that the New Deal was not a social-welfare program. The Great Depression was a natural disaster that affected everybody, the just and the unjust alike. When the Democrats took the White House in 1933, they did not attempt a tremendous program of social change. What they came up with was an ambitious program of public works.

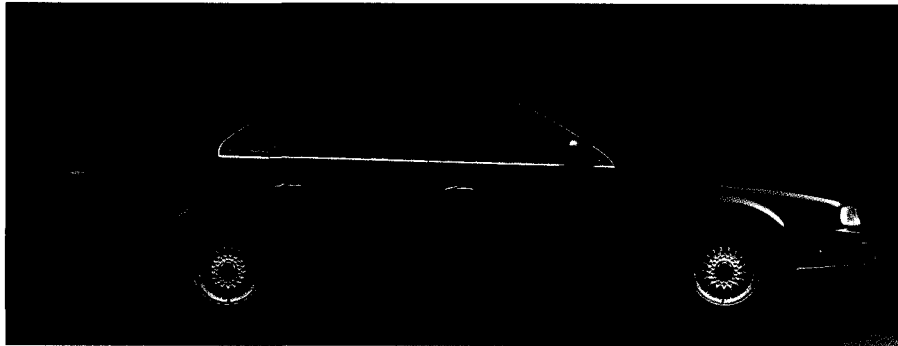
The other lesson for Democrats comes from the Reagan era: Don't raise taxes that hurt everybody. Democrats saw what happened to Walter Mondale in 1984 when he proposed a general tax increase. Suburban middle-class voters, however, are willing to consider specifically targeted fees and taxes. That was the principle behind the highway bill passed in 1987 over President Reagan's veto. The bill designated revenues from the highway trust fund to pay for road and bridge construction. Congress proudly pointed to the fact that the bill did not do anything to increase the federal deficit. Of course, it did not do anything to reduce the deficit either.

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lem is not to raise taxes or spend government money at all. Just mandate that employers pay more in benefits to their workers. Raise the minimum wage. Require employers to pay for health insurance and grant parental and medical leave. The idea is to expand “workers’ rights” and “family rights”—that is, entitlements—by making business, not government, pay for them. These kinds of proposals elicit a great many complaints from business, particularly small business, which bears most of the burden. But they draw few complaints from taxpayers.

According to *The New York Times*, state and local governments have been relying increasingly on special-purpose taxes, revenues frequently raised from specific groups of taxpayers and used for specific purposes. Among the examples: a \$10 increase in marriage-license fees in Colorado to pay for child-abuse prevention programs. Higher real-estate taxes for downtown property owners in an eighty-block area of Philadelphia to pay for enhanced security and special street-cleaning services. A dollar a year added to automobile insurance premiums in Michigan to pay for auto-theft prevention programs. Taxes on beer in several states to pay for anti-drunk-driving and alcohol rehabilitation programs.

“The logical place for this to wind up,” the criminologist Lawrence W. Sherman told the *Times*, “is that every crime will have its own tax, except for the unpopular offenses that involve the poor or that are not important to middle-class voters.” Precisely. Special-purpose taxes are the suburban ideal—not just private government but private taxes.

The message to Democrats is: In order to compete for a suburban electorate, keep spending as broad as possible and make taxes as specific as possible.

That, of course, is the exact reverse of urban priorities. The urban agenda consists of broad-based taxes and targeted spending programs: tax as many people as possible in order to provide for the needs of specific disadvantaged groups. That requires means-testing. Probably the most difficult thing to do in politics these days is to sell means-tested programs to suburban voters. They know that they will end up paying for the programs and that the benefits will go to people of more modest means. To middle-class voters, a program that helps the few and taxes the many is an outrage. A program that helps the many and taxes the few seems eminently fair.

The Collapse of “Operational Conservatism”?

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, IN *THE POLITICAL BELIEFS of Americans*, Lloyd A. Free and Hadley Cantril described the American public as ideologically conservative and operationally liberal. Their polls showed that Americans professed a belief in small government but at the same time supported a wide range of government subsidies and spending programs.

The Democrats ruled by appealing to those operational sentiments. “President Johnson was correct,” Free and Cantril concluded, “when he indicated that the argument over the welfare state had been resolved in favor of federal action to achieve it.”

The Reagan era appears to have reversed that formulation. During the 1980s public opinion grew more liberal on issues of government spending and intervention. Nevertheless, the anti-tax consensus has held fast. Today’s “operational conservatism” is sustained by both continued public resistance to tax increases and widespread cynicism about what government can do. That operational conservatism has enabled Republicans to control the agenda since 1978.

The operational liberalism of the Johnson era was legitimized by the Democratic Party’s ability to keep the country prosperous. The New Deal and the Second World War, with their unprecedented expansion of federal power, had saved the country from the Great Depression. Americans are pragmatists. They believe that if something works, it must be right. If liberalism meant prosperity, as it did from the 1930s through the 1960s, then it was all right with most Americans.

The operational conservatism of the Reagan era also had pragmatic roots. It was legitimized by the Republican Party’s ability to keep the country prosperous. The Reagan Revolution, with its tax cuts and its unprecedented attack on federal power, saved the country from the Great Inflation. As long as low taxes and limited government worked, Americans had no quarrel with Reaganomics.

But Reaganomics isn’t working anymore. *The Boston Globe* has reported that after four years in office, Bush is likely to end up with the poorest record of economic growth of any President since Harry Truman. Economists estimate that the country’s average annual growth rate from 1989 through 1992 will be 1.6 percent—far lower than the yearly growth rate under Ronald Reagan (3.0 percent), Jimmy Carter (3.1 percent), Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford (2.2 percent), and Lyndon Johnson (4.6 percent). No President with that kind of record is supposed to be re-elected. During his 1988 campaign Bush promised to create thirty million new jobs in eight years. At the

The message to Democrats is: In order to compete for a suburban electorate, keep spending as broad as possible and make taxes as specific as possible. That is the reverse of urban priorities.

Test your knowledge of CFCs and natural gas air conditioning.

Q

1. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are the primary cause of:
A. Acid rain B. Upper-level ozone depletion
C. Contaminated water D. All of the above

2. Refrigeration and cooling—in vehicles, homes, businesses and industrial processes—are responsible for about 40% of global CFC production. Of this amount, production for commercial and industrial use represents:
A. 15% B. 25% C. 40% D. 60%

3. Natural gas heats, but it can also cool—and save money. Gas cooling systems are least expensive to operate in the:
A. Summer B. Fall C. Winter D. Spring

A

1. Answer: B. CFCs have been linked to the depletion of the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere. This allows more damaging ultraviolet rays to reach the earth. To protect us, we need sunscreens and common sense; to protect the ozone layer, we need to reduce CFCs. One major source: electric air conditioning systems. One alternative: natural gas absorption type cooling systems which use water and salt instead of CFCs. Gas cooling systems can reduce energy costs without depleting the ozone layer.

2. Answer: D. According to preliminary EPA estimates of domestic CFC emissions, home refrigerators and freezers contribute more than 5,000 metric tons annually, while cold storage represents 8,000 tons, retail food refrigeration more than 12,000 and industrial processes nearly 30,000. Protecting the ozone layer will require a major global effort to reduce CFC use in commerce and industry.

3. Answer: A. Gas cooling systems benefit from a fortuitous coincidence: natural gas prices are the lowest in the summer, just when air conditioning often pushes electricity costs to their annual peak. Because annual electricity costs are often calculated based on peak demand, switching to natural gas cooling can often result in year-long savings. It's not always possible to save money while protecting the environment, but when it is, why not look for the natural solution—natural gas!

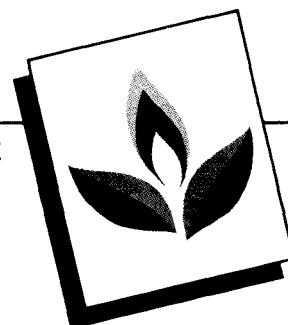
There are no simple answers ...but there are smart choices.

You *know* that the hole in the earth's protective ozone layer is caused by chlorofluorocarbons—CFCs. And you know that a major source of CFCs is found in the cooling elements of refrigerators and air conditioners. What you may not know is that a major solution can be found in air conditioning that runs on natural gas. Because the technology behind commercial natural gas absorption cooling does *not* use CFCs. It uses simple salt and water. And that's just one of its advantages. Natural gas cooling often costs less to operate than electric cooling. If you'd like to find out more about natural gas air conditioning, talk to the experts at your local natural gas company. In times like these, they're well worth looking up.

There's a hole in the sky!



Use natural gas. We'll all breathe easier.



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rate he is going, fewer than five million will have been created by the end of 1996.

Bush's failure gives Democrats an opportunity to woo the middle-class vote on the economic issue—but only if they understand the middle-class view of government. In 1988 Michael Dukakis went after middle-class voters the same way Democrats have always gone after constituencies. His message was: You've got a problem; we've got a program.

Dukakis had a program to provide child care to families with working parents. He had a program to help young families afford home mortgages. He had a program to help students cope with college-tuition costs. He had a program to provide health insurance to all working Americans. His programs were, for the most part, ingeniously designed to be self-financing. The Democrats could do it all without a tax increase. How? All you had to do was read the position papers.

But middle-class voters were suspicious of government programs. They figured that they would end up paying for the programs while the benefits would go to someone else. George Bush's answer to "the middle-class squeeze" was far more persuasive. What he promised middle-class voters was prosperity. "I am optimistic and I believe we can keep this long expansion going," Bush said in the second campaign debate.

That's what the middle class wanted to hear. Their message to the candidates was: Just protect our jobs, keep the paychecks coming in, and hold taxes down. We'll solve our problems for ourselves. We'll send our kids to college. You just keep the recovery going.

But Bush didn't. And now he's in danger of losing the middle class. Some Republicans believe that if they lose middle-class votes on the economy, they can get them back with an appeal to values. A Republican strategist told *The New York Times* early this year, "If you look at the middle class as just this monolithic group driven by economic self-interest, I think that's wrong. . . . that's what the Democrats are doing right now, and I think they'll get blind-sided by a whole set of values and other issues that will appeal to these voters."

The problem with that argument is that middle-class voters are well educated and tend to be moderate on social issues.

Democrats, too, can appeal to their values. If the Supreme Court votes to overturn *Roe v. Wade* this year, Republicans will find themselves on the defensive on values as well as economics.

On social issues, the suburban voters of the 1990s are quite different from the silent majority of the 1970s or the Reagan Democrats of the 1980s. They are not backlash voters. Look at California, the model for the new suburban electorate. Since the passage of Proposition 13, in 1978, California has tended to be tax-averse and stingy with public funds. But it is also one of the most environmentally conscious and pro-choice states in the country.

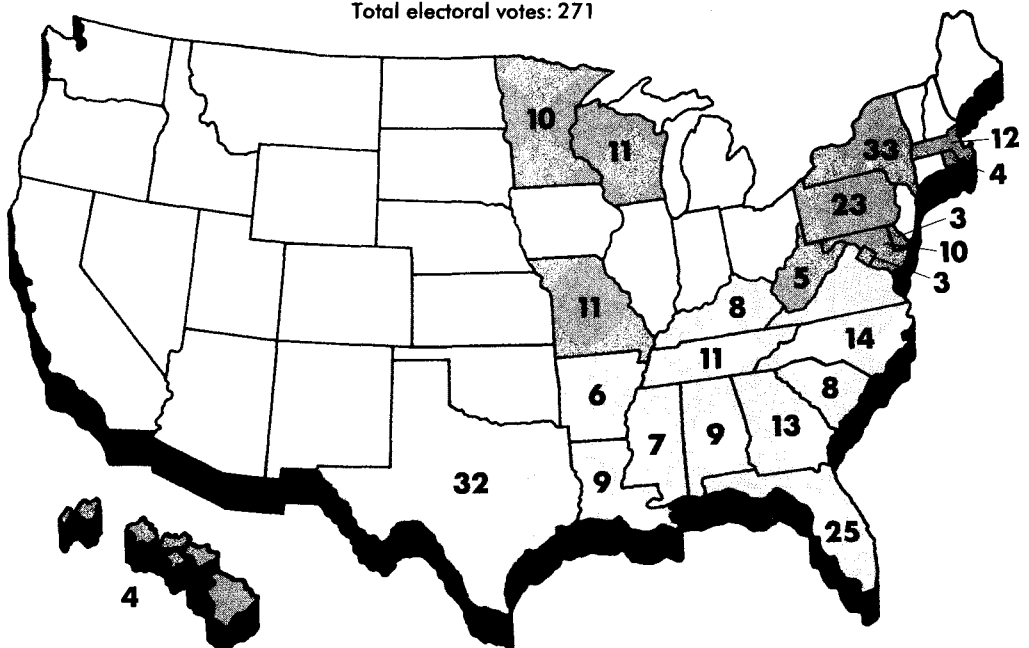
New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley knows these voters. He is one of them, and he almost got destroyed by their tax revolt in his own state. In a deeply felt and highly personal speech delivered in the Senate last July, Bradley accused President Bush of "inflaming racial tension to perpetuate power and then using that power to reward the rich and ignore the poor." Bradley said to Bush, "You have tried to turn the Willie Horton code of 1988 into the quotas code of 1992."

Bradley's message was a simple and powerful "*J'accuse*." He didn't accuse Bush of being a racist. He accused him of dividing the country and failing to provide moral leadership. And he came close to accusing Bush of being a hypocrite. "We measure our leader by what he says and by what he does," Bradley said. "If both what he says and what he does are destructive of racial harmony, we must conclude that he wants to destroy racial harmony."

In an interview later in his office, Bradley told me that he believes there are a lot of voters out there who feel the way he does. He described them as "independent suburban voters who are under fifty and who care about civil

THE SOUTHERN STRATEGY

Total electoral votes: 271



rights, who care about America's role in the world, who are concerned about the budget deficit because they are starting to have kids."

He didn't think those voters could be reached by appealing to their racial or economic resentment. One had to appeal to their aspirations and ideals. "They define our national identity partly in terms of ethnic and racial harmony," Bradley explained. The Democrats can get them by exposing the Republicans as the party of divisiveness and intolerance. "They're going to turn off," Bradley said, once they know they're being asked to support "someone whose path to power has been to destroy that harmony, consciously, explicitly, and deliberately."

Bradley is on to something. The swing voters in the electorate today are young, well educated, moderate, and independent. They fill the suburbs of states like New Jersey and California. They have been voting Republican, not because of race but because they see the Democrats as either corrupt or fiscally incompetent. These voters are uncomfortable with the Republican positions on race and abortion; at least, they will be if the Republicans keep pursuing the "southern strategy"—that is, running on the same conservative social values they used in 1988 to portray Michael Dukakis as outside the national mainstream.

A Southern or a Suburban Strategy?

THESE DAYS, DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES consistently do worse in the South than in any other part of the country. Even Carter could not hold the South against Reagan in 1980. Democrats can either try to win it back or pursue a suburban or "California" strategy—go for the industrial

states of the West Coast, the Midwest, and the Northeast.

Which strategy seems more promising for 1992? If you rank the states by the average vote they gave Jimmy Carter in 1976 and 1980, you get the southern strategy. The two elections in which the Democrats did best in California, relative to the national average, were 1972 and 1988. Those were the years when the Democrats nominated New Politics liberals, George McGovern and Michael Dukakis. If you average the 1972 and 1988 Democratic votes and rank the states, you have the suburban strategy.

There are eleven states (plus the District of Columbia) that the Democrats would have to carry under either strategy to get an electoral-vote majority. The eleven states are West Virginia, Rhode Island, Minnesota, Maryland, Massachusetts, Delaware, New York, Hawaii, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. These are the Democrats' base. Seven of them are in the North and East. The Democrats averaged 53.5 percent of the vote in these states and the District in 1988. Eight went for Dukakis, while the other four (Pennsylvania, Maryland, Missouri, and Delaware) voted for Bush.

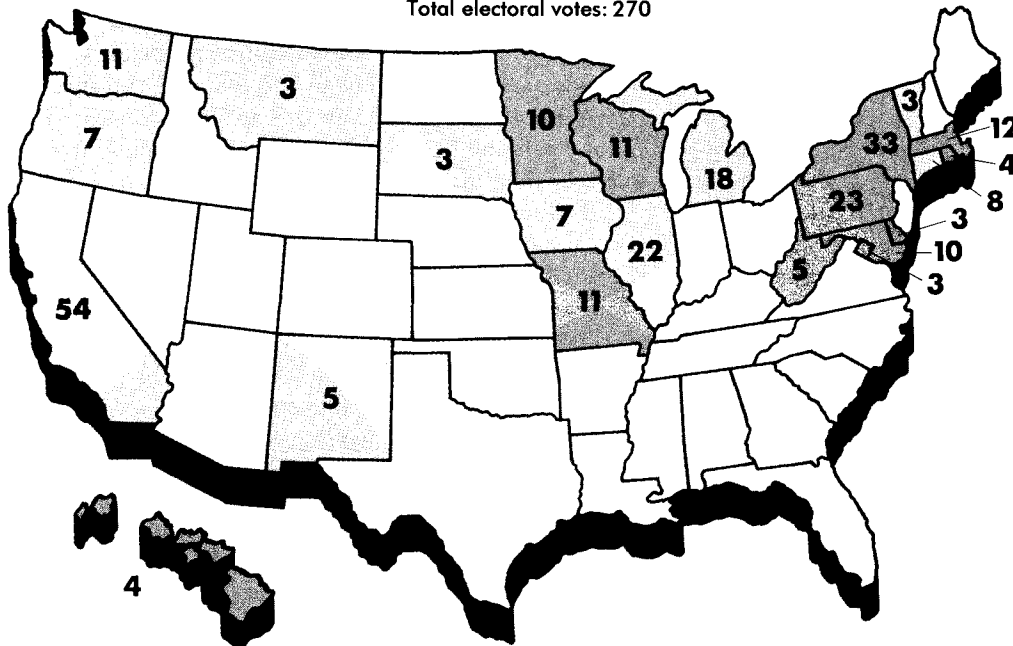
Under the suburban strategy, the Democrats would need to carry eleven additional states, mostly on the West Coast and in the industrial Midwest. Only three of those states went Democratic in 1988. But the vote tended to be close. On average, the eleven states needed for the suburban strategy voted 48.4 percent Democratic in 1988.

The southern strategy also adds eleven new states to the Democratic base. All of them are southern. Not a single one voted for Dukakis in 1988. The Democrats averaged only 41.0 percent of the vote in these eleven states.

This means that it would take a much stronger swing to get the South to vote Democratic in 1992 than it would to build a winning coalition outside the South. Dukakis was supposed to be pursuing a suburban strategy in 1988. In fact, Dukakis did pretty well in the prototypical suburban state, California—47.6 percent, two points better than he did in the country as a whole. In both 1976 and 1980 Carter did worse in California than he did in the country as a whole. Nevertheless, Democrats know one thing about Dukakis: he was a disaster. He got

THE SUBURBAN STRATEGY

Total electoral votes: 270



wiped out in the South, despite the presence of Texas Senator Lloyd Bentsen on the ticket.

The southern strategy is the anti-Dukakis strategy. It targets Reagan Democrats, the white, blue-collar constituency that is Democratic by heritage but has abandoned the Democratic Party in presidential elections since the civil-rights movement of the 1960s. Reagan Democrats tend to be liberal on economic issues (pro-labor, pro-"fairness") and conservative on social issues (race, religion, and foreign policy). In other words, they are populists.

The southern strategy means going after the states where Dukakis was weakest in 1988—and where the Democrats have been weakest for twenty-five years. The alternative is to build strength in the states where Dukakis did relatively well, like California. That requires a suburban strategy, which would target the so-called "new collar" Baby Boom voters. (Southern suburban voters, in contrast, are usually very conservative socially and economically, and therefore much harder for the Democrats to capture.) They are relatively affluent and well educated. They tend to be fiscally conservative and socially liberal, the antithesis of populism. They are independent by heritage and anti-establishment by inclination. They don't like racial politics. They are pro-choice on abortion. And they feel betrayed by George Bush on the economy.

Ross Perot's prospective candidacy as an independent helps make the case for the suburban strategy. The polls show Perot running strongest in the West. Perot could take enough votes from Bush to tilt this historically Republican region to the Democrats—but only if Clinton makes a credible showing in a region where he, too, is weak.

To win back the middle class, Democrats will have to regain credibility on the issue of economic growth. They will have to persuade the voters that Democrats can manage the economy better than Republicans. The recession gives the Democrats an opportunity—but only an opportunity—to do that.

Bill Clinton, the presumptive Democratic nominee, pitches his message directly at what he calls "the forgotten middle class." He calls on Democrats to abandon the "tax and spend" policies of the past. He criticizes congressional Democrats for contributing to the mismanagement of the economy during the 1980s. He talks about restoring a sense of personal responsibility. That's a subtle way of trying to change the Democratic Party's image. More personal responsibility means less government responsibility. It's a way of saying, "We're not going to have a program for every problem. People are basically responsible for themselves. That's the middle-class way."

If New York Governor Mario M. Cuomo had run for President, Bill Clinton would have been Gary Hart, the candidate of new ideas. Instead, after Paul Tsongas won the New Hampshire primary, Clinton was thrust into the role of Walter Mondale, the fairness candidate.

Clinton is not an Old Politics Democrat, however. The candidate who came closest to that message in 1992 was Tom Harkin. Harkin's departure from the race in early March marked a turning point. He was the last New Dealer. None of the other Democrats defended the party's traditional message of taxing, spending, and big government, and its championing of big labor.

In fact, the three Democrats who have done best this year, Clinton, Tsongas, and Jerry Brown, share a skeptical, pragmatic view of government. Clinton, after all, chaired the Democratic Leadership Council, an organization whose objective has been to move the Democratic Party away from interest-group liberalism (and from Jesse Jackson, who has referred to the DLC as "Democrats for the Leisure Class"). Clinton's message, like that of Tsongas, is aimed squarely at the suburban middle class.

Clinton won the primaries by combining the South with the Democrats' shrinking urban base. That is not a formula for victory in November, however. The South is no longer solidly Democratic. And the urban base doesn't have enough votes anymore. The Democrats have to break into the suburbs by proving that they understand something they have never made an effort to understand in the past—namely, the values and priorities of suburban America.

Clinton may be able to do that. But he also has to do something else: overcome unusually strong personal negatives. In some ways Clinton is in the same situation that Ronald Reagan was in 1980. As unpopular as Carter was that year, the voters were afraid of Reagan. They saw him as a right-wing extremist who might start a war or throw old people out in the snow. The election remained a dead heat until the last few days of the campaign, when Reagan took advantage of the final debate to recast the election as a referendum on Carter's record ("Ask yourself, are you better off than you were four years ago?"). Reagan also reassured the voters that he was not a monster and would not do the foolish things he often said he wanted to do. Things were so bad under Carter that the voters finally decided they had to have change. The country couldn't keep going the way it was going. So they took a chance and elected Reagan.

Bill Clinton has a harder task. He must reassure voters of his basic integrity. He may be able to do it, because he is a skillful and accomplished politician. That is his strength. It is also his weakness, because 1992 is a year when the voters do not seem to be looking for a skillful and accomplished politician—as the rise of Perot, the populist billionaire anti-politician, indicates.

Clinton is a master at having everything both ways. As he tries to straddle the South and the suburbs, the shrinking Democratic base and the swing voters of the middle class, that quality of his political persona and his personal character will be put to the test. In fact, he will face two tests. One test is whether he can do it. The other is whether the voters want someone who can do it. □

A Short Story



The Pink House

by John H. Richardson

WE STOOD IN AN EMPTY HOUSE LOOKING at a walk-in closet. At least Mom and I did; Dad stood by the window smoking a cigarette and pretending to ignore us. We had been house-hunting for three days, and Dad had been cranky since the middle of the first day, when he realized just how much house he could expect for his money (double what he could get in the States, but there was no telling him that). By now he was impossible. As the real-estate agent ran down the history of the house, he gazed out over the red-tiled rooftops with a look of growing misery. The sun flowing into the dark room etched pits and hollows into his face until he looked as harsh as a monk in a medieval woodcut.

Mom leaned in to inspect the closet. She nodded her head at the shelves, confirming their existence, doing the polite thing, making the agent happy.

"Walk-in closet," Dad muttered. "We don't need a walk-in closet."

My parents had been living in Mexico for almost two years, since shortly after my father retired. They chose Tonalá because of its superb climate—second

only to Nairobi's, everyone said—and because it housed the largest expatriate community of retired Americans in the world, nearly a hundred thousand of them. There were book clubs, garden clubs, eating clubs, golf courses galore, the American Society and its many functions, and Mom and Dad had quickly gathered a group of friends. Now Mom wanted to buy a house. She promised Dad his own garden, his own library. It would have a high wall, Mexican style. An oasis. They'd pay for it in cash and never have to worry about rent again.

Dad wasn't persuaded. He spoke again, louder: "We don't need a walk-in closet."

Mom avoided the agent's look. She spoke with patient reason, as to a child. "There's nothing unusual about a walk-in closet."

Dad cleared his throat gruffly. "Well, I don't need one

and I don't see any point in spending a small fortune to have one."

This was one of his tricks for getting out of something he didn't want to do: simply saying he didn't feel like it would be rude, by his lights, so he worked up a steam of indignation until we gave in to his bad mood. He brought his cigarette to his mouth. The cigarette had a very long ash, nearly half its length. We all looked at it. Despite the slight trembling of Dad's hand, the ash didn't fall.

"Maybe we'd better come back another time," Mom said to the agent, giving her a stretched-across-the-teeth social smile.

In the car she opened her purse in her lap and began adjusting her makeup. We waited. "Really, Richard," she said. "Must you embarrass me like that?"

Dad said nothing.

"That was a perfectly reasonable house. There was nothing extreme about that house."

"It had a swimming pool," Dad said.

Mom made a *tch* sound.

"There'll be bills," Dad said. "Cleaning bills, heating bills, bills for chemicals and what-not. I don't need a pool. You don't need a pool."

"It might be nice to go swimming," Mom said.

Dad scowled. "I'd say your swimming days are over."

Mom was silent for a moment. Finally she spoke. "Thank you very much," she said, a stop in her voice.

Watching from the back seat, I thought Mom was overdoing it a bit, enjoying the melodrama of a personal offense. "Looked like a great house to me," I said.

They ignored me. But I knew it would be best to continue to fill the silence, that being one of the primary functions of children. So I babbled. "The acoustics were great, what a place to play guitar, that living room, big kitchen, loved all that tile work, it was just great."

That was for Mom. Now for Dad: "Of course, I don't see what you want to buy a house for down here anyway. I mean, California, that would be cool, near the beach, but that's me, and you guys have your own priorities and

He did not want a swimming pool, or walk-in closets. He wasn't sure he wanted to buy a house in the first place. His wife and son, however, hoped to show him the way

needs and stuff, which I guess include living in this God-forsaken, disease-ridden, macho, sexist country."

"I'm not sure I do want to buy a house," Dad said. "Your mother is the one who insists on it."

Dad flipped on the turn signal and glanced at the lane to his right, his face dark with concentration. Mom didn't speak until there was a break in the traffic. "Honestly," she said. "You talked to the accountant. You talked to Dr. Joe. You were the one who said we should do this—and I agreed. Now, when it comes to the point of actually doing something, you make everything impossible. This happens every time we try to make a decision."

Dad just compressed his lips and looked out his side window. Mom could see that continuing the conversation was pointless, and we rode the rest of the way home in silence.

When we got home—home that year being an apartment near midtown—Dad went straight into the kitchen. After a moment we heard the clink of glass and bottle. When Dad emerged, glass in hand, Mom gave him a critical look, which he ignored. "I'm going to read," he said, heading for his bedroom.

Mom shook her head and sighed, moving toward the kitchen. I followed. "Are you hungry?" she asked.

"I thought I'd go out for a while," I said. "Get some tostadas."

I leaned against the counter as she went through the refrigerator. The kitchen was blue—blue fridge, blue counter, blue walls. "This is the way it's been," she said. "He's been this way ever since he retired. I honestly don't know if I can stand it much longer."

She shifted a few Tupperware containers in search of something.

"Come on, Mom," I said, thinking she was being melodramatic again. "You're not talking . . . divorce?"

"I've thought about it," she said grimly, wiping her mayonnaise knife clean with two definite strokes against the edge of a slice of bread.

I was quiet for a few moments, giving ritual gravity to Mom's statement even though I didn't remotely believe it. Now she was setting up a tray with salt and pepper shakers and a placemat, good china, a Steuben crystal glass, even a miniature vase and one small rosebud. In our house there was always a flower on every tray.

Divorce: the thought annoyed me. The confidence annoyed me. But it had nothing to do with me. I hadn't even seen much of the folks for the past seven years, since I was sixteen and they got hysterical over some minor recreational drug abuse. I got into college early, came home once or twice for vacation—the last time two years ago, the year Dad retired and I graduated from college. That was another disaster. So I was surprised and a little flattered—and secretly pleased—when Mom called me up and said that Dad wasn't doing very well, could I come down?

"This'll blow over," I said. "He's just having trouble adjusting to retired life."

"Some trouble," she said. She looked the tray over, aligned a fork, picked it up, and started for the door.

"Maybe if you didn't wait on him hand and foot," I said.

"He should eat," she said, taking the tray to his bedroom.

When she opened the door, I saw Dad lying sideways on the bed, propped up on his elbow with a cigarette in one hand and a book in the other. He turned a page and looked up, his expression vague. As Mom carried the tray to the bed, he shifted to make room for it and his cigarette ash fell on the bedspread, which was already burned in a half-dozen places. "Oh, Richard," Mom said, quickly brushing the ash away.

ESCAPE! I SHOT DOWN THE STAIRS OF OUR small apartment building (pillbox balconies, smell of damp cement) and burst out onto the street. The street was narrow here, choked with trees that split the sidewalks, but down a few blocks was a broad divided boulevard with grass and trees and fountains in the middle and a statue on every corner. At one end stood a huge sculpture of the Child Heroes, a few dozen schoolboys who had fought the North American imperialist armies with primitive guns and no grown-up supervision (they were slaughtered, of course, but they showed initiative). At the other end was a huge grocery store, an example of the recent national fad for giant *mercados*. For a while I just strolled around looking at girls. Finally I ducked into my favorite tostada place—wherever I was, I always found a favorite restaurant and always ordered the same thing—and ordered two beers and tostadas, which I wolfed down with sudden hunger. Then I picked up my head and inhaled the balmy, flowered air: jacarandas, bougainvillea, gardenias. It seemed a terrible injustice that there was no one around to have sex with.

THE NEXT MORNING AT NINE-THIRTY MOM was already walking around the apartment, picking at things. She fluffed the pillows on the sofa. She ran a finger across the lid of a cigarette box. "I told him we were leaving at ten," she said. "This is just like him." Then she turned to me and confided, "He was up all night." She called out his name.

"I'll get him," I said. I went to Dad's door and knocked once, twice, pushed it open. The room was dark and stank of cigarettes. Dad lay on his back, his mouth open, his fringe of gray hair tufted from his skull. I touched his leg to see if it was warm.

"Dad," I said, shaking him by the shoulder. "Dad." His eyes opened. It took a moment for him to focus. He gave me a weak and pitiful smile. "Oh," he said, clearing his throat.

"Mom's getting antsy," I said, my voice cold. "She wants to get going."

"I'm getting up," Dad said. He folded back the covers. His body seemed smaller than I remembered, his legs and arms brown and wiry, his belly pregnant and white. As he sat up, the fly of his boxer shorts gaped open.

Dad sat on the bed, his feet on the floor, his hands holding the edge of the mattress. His big toes had extremely thick nails that curved sideways, making his feet look almost deformed. The toes were bright red.

"What's wrong with your toes?" I said.

Dad said nothing.

"They look infected," I said.

Dad grunted dismissively. He put his hands on his thighs and moved forward into a half-crouch; then he pushed off the bed, balancing and straightening at the same time. He faced me, gave an absent nod, and then bowed his head and reached for his robe.

An hour later he was dressed in his uniform of double-knit pants and *guayabera*, an open-necked Mexican "dress" shirt, which seemed to me quite a come-down from the expensive suits he used to wear. His face was like a shirt from a suitcase, clean but creased. We rode the elevator down to the garage and got in the car and drove off, Dad mad-deningly slow at everything from locking the front door to getting the car out of the garage. As we got to the garage door, Dad said, for the third time in as many days, "This is an electronic door. We have all the latest improvements here."

Despite his hangover, he was trying to be hearty, a proper member of the stoic generation, the Depression generation that never complained, that took pride in bluffing their way through the day no matter how bad they felt (except for those occasional explosions). This annoyed me, and I stayed glumly silent. How could he resolve his problems if he ignored his feelings? When I had a hangover, I babied myself.

An hour later Mom stood in the middle of a kitchen as the real-estate agent threw open cabinets. The agent was talking about how wonderful it was that this house had so much storage space. Mom oohed and aahed. "Is this a mi-

crowave?" she asked. "That's the first one I've ever seen."

"Mom," I said, "we owned a microwave. Remember? In Whittier?"

"I meant down here," she said. "You hardly ever see them down here." She turned to Dad, who was standing in the doorway trying to muster an expression of mild bemusement. "Look at that, Richard. A microwave." Dad grunted.

"No walk-in closets this time," the agent said. Mom and Dad forced out social chuckles. "There is a safe, however," she added.

"That would be useful," Mom said. "We could give up the safe-deposit box. Save a few hundred pesos."

Dad put on a mock expression of joyous gratitude—his eyebrows went way up, his smile spread absurdly wide. "Now, that interests me," he said. "Now you have caught my interest. You're appealing to my deepest desires."

The agent laughed. "Would you care to see it?" she said. We trooped off to the bedroom to inspect the safe. It was set into the wall, the paint around it darker where a painting must have hung. It was gray, like gun-metal but stippled, with walls about an inch thick. The inside was just big enough to stack five or six hardback books.

"It looks sturdy enough," Dad said.

"It's fireproof, too," the agent said.

We all stood there for a minute, staring into the gray steel box.

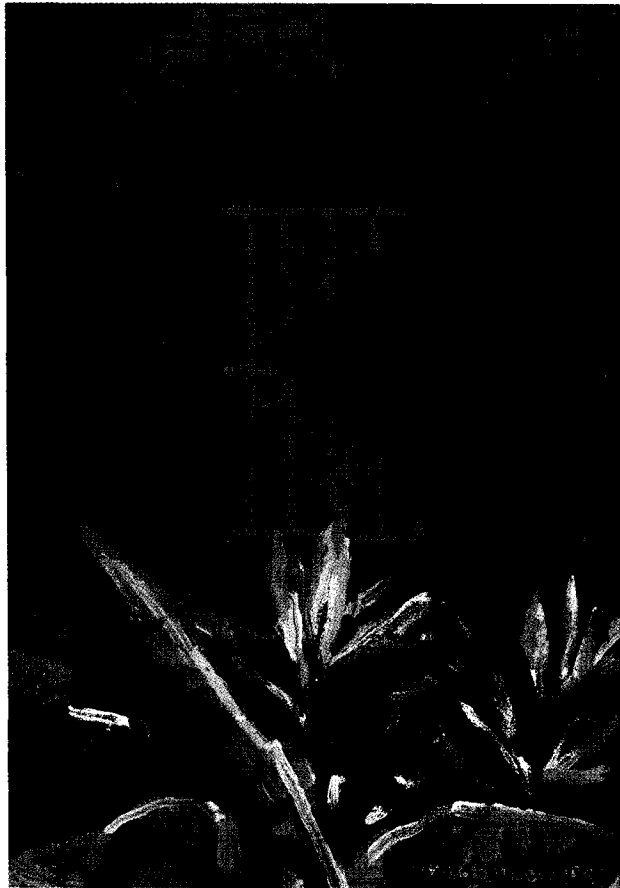
"WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THAT house?" Mom asked bitterly an hour later, as we drove home.

"Am I not permitted simply to dislike something?" Dad said. "Did I work my entire life to be forced to buy a house I don't want to buy?"

"It would be nice if you had a reason," Mom said.

"I didn't like it," Dad said. "I just didn't like it. It was too bright, or too dark, or something."

"Too bright or too dark? Honestly."



"Well, damn it," Dad said.

"I agree with Pop," I said. "That house sucked."

"Daniel," Mom said, this time using the same exasperated tone on me.

"It did. It was too close, like a zoo or something, the way all the bedrooms and even the kitchen opened onto the living room. I kept expecting to see bars on the doors and some little cave in the back where the animals go to hide."

"That's exactly it," Dad said. "I couldn't have put it that well myself, son. That's exactly it. A zoo. A Goddamn zoo. At the cost of over one hundred thousand dollars."

Once again Mom sighed, chastising me with her eyes in the rearview mirror.

"And there was no pool," I said, just to be a monster. Dad fell right in with it.

"At that price it should have a pool," he agreed, nodding. Mom widened her eyes in outrage.

LATER THAT DAY MOM HELD OUT A CANAPÉ tray to Frankie Day, her principal ally in the Battle to Buy a House. Frankie was about fifty, with a crewcut and bright red cheeks. He was a retired real-estate mogul, and Mom's confidant.

Even though Dad was sitting right there, Mom spoke in a whisper. "We can't even get through two houses a day, he gets so mad."

Frankie spoke to Dad with his exaggerated, ironic drawl. "Really, Richard, you can't expect to see just the thing you want your first day out. You know Raoul? Who owns that little restaurant in Los Oblatos? He spent two solid months looking, and he found that marvelous place—you were there on Leticia's birthday—with the flowering trees?"

"It is lovely," Mom said.

"What did he pay, though?" my father said. For reasons obscure to all of us, he showed Frankie a lot of respect. "I can't believe these prices."

Frankie nodded. "Everything is going up," he agreed. "It's the market—it's absolutely wild, and I don't think it's going to get better."

Mom gave him a look. "At least not soon," Frankie said quickly. He knew the rules.

But it was too late. Dad went off on a fret about the local stock market. For the past year or two it had been his personal gold mine, and every time he'd mentioned it he had preened like a proud father. But he also seemed to worry about it constantly. What if it were all a delusion, a mirage? What if he lost his *guayabera*? These doubts made him even more fiercely loyal. When I wondered out loud if the Mexican stock market was the best place to put his money, he gave a little chuckle that said he knew better. But when Frankie said he had his doubts too, Dad started asking fearful questions. What have you heard? Which stocks are weakening?

Finally Frankie and Mom managed to steer the subject back to the house. "You know, Richard," Frankie said, "if you want to save money, the best places are outside Chapultapec altogether. Even Providencia is getting expensive."

Mom had suggested this dozens of times, but Dad would have none of it.

"You can get a mansion out at the lake for . . ."

"I will not live at the lake!" Dad blurted.

Mom frowned at him; his sudden vehemence was inappropriate. "Richard," she said.

Dad shook his head and waved his cigarette, refusing to be shushed. "Everyone we know lives here," he said to Frankie. "Margaret wouldn't want to live too far from here."

"Nobody said we had to buy at the lake," Mom said. "We're just talking."

"I don't like the lake," Dad continued. "It's too damn remote from everything. It's isolated. There's no hospital. I just don't like it."

"Okay," Mom said.

"Well, damn it," Dad said.

Frankie and Mom sipped at their drinks while Dad pouted.

"I always liked the lake," I said.

Frankie took over again. "What you want to think about, Richard, is somewhere out on the outskirts, like Chapalita or Oblatos. Quiet, close to town, cheap. Lots of people are moving out there now. Rancho Contento is a lovely place, for instance."

"Which one?"

"The one near Oblatos, away from the *barranca*," Frankie said.

"The one that changed its name?" Mom said. There had been a lawsuit between the two Rancho Contentos, and one was now called Rancho Mirage, but everyone still enjoyed the confusion and refused to use the new name.

Frankie nodded. "Remember, Richard? Where Dette and Bo live? The Breeces, from Texas?"

Dad shrugged.

"And Serena, the actress," Frankie said.

"It's nice, isn't it?" Mom said. "Remember the cobble streets?"

Dad nodded grudgingly. "I don't think I could live in a place named Rancho Contento."

"It really is a charming place," Frankie said. "I hear you can get a three- or four-bedroom house with a half acre for about sixty thousand American. That won't buy you maid's quarters in Chapultapec."

"Sixty thousand?" Dad asked.

Dad was weakening, and Frankie ran with it. He mentioned the convenient shopping center, and the advantage of access to the back road to the airport, and the popular Aguas Calientes hot springs nearby. The Rancho even had its own little nine-hole golf course, splitting the older, top half of the development from the newer half

below, with the lowest green fees of any course in the area. There were lovely places to walk. It was well protected, surrounded completely by a wall, and always had a guard at the gate. Not to mention the convenient Club Deportivo de Tonalá, with its tennis courts, indoor pool, and popular bar. And the nearby town of Los Oblatos was so historic. "You know the Arabian Nights, that marvelous little restaurant," Frankie said. "With the patio? We ate there. With the peacocks?"

All this was according to Mom's plan. We weren't surprised when, immediately after Frankie left, Dad solemnly observed that perhaps we should look a bit out in Rancho Contento, despite its awful, unfortunate name.

Mom looked at me and rolled her eyes.

Later Dad confided in me. "Your mother prefers it here," he said, "but it's just too damned expensive. I can't afford to buy here. I have to think how she's going to manage when I pass on."

The next morning Mom made a few calls, and by lunch we were driving out to Rancho Contento. It was a rustic-looking private development with wide, rough-cobbled streets, completely surrounded by a mossy brick wall. In the lower half most of the houses had open lawns, in the American manner, but above the golf course the streets wandered into the foothills and the houses all had walls. There were even a few crumbling haciendas dating back to just before the Mexican Revolution, huge shady estates as quiet and timeless as monasteries. On the widest of five avenues horses moved slowly along the dusty center divide. It looked exactly like an older Mexican neighborhood, but without any of the dark little corner stores that sell nothing but bread, sodas, cigarettes, gum, and tired-looking fruit.

Dad had never been above the golf course before, and was quite impressed. As we explored, the real-estate agent told us the peculiar history of the Rancho. It was originally settled near the turn of the century by an American who had made a fortune in the Alaska gold rush and came south to found the proverbial gleaming city on a hill. But the American got chased out by the revolution and returned north a broken man; not only was his wife killed in the fighting, but his sister took up with a young Mexi-

can revolutionary and actually carried a rifle into battle by his side. The American left behind only a few scattered haciendas and the rough outline of imagined streets.

Half an hour later we were standing outside a huge house. We were in the highest part of the Rancho, where the streets parted around giant gnarled cottonwoods and all the gates looked like entrances to Aztec tombs. The house before us was at least fifty years old, maybe sixty, one of the first large places built on the hillside after the revolution. The wall around it was massive, ten feet high and at least two feet thick. The agent was saying we

could get the house "for a song," because the owner wanted out quickly.

"It's quite impressive," Dad said.

Mom didn't say anything.

The agent pushed open the door. Inside, the house was dark and dusty; Mom's nose wrinkled in immediate distaste. At the back of the foyer a curving staircase rose up to a narrow balcony. On one side was a living room, on the other what seemed to be a library. "Well," Dad said. He was still standing just inside the door. "It's quite baronial."

The agent said the house was selling for just ninety thousand dollars. Dad appeared to be pleasantly surprised—this house was twice the size of the ones we had been looking at.

Mom ran her finger along a table and brought it up for inspection. It was black. She

looked at the ceilings dubiously.

"It hasn't been cleaned for months," the agent said quickly. "Not since the owner went back north."

"It is dusty," Mom said.

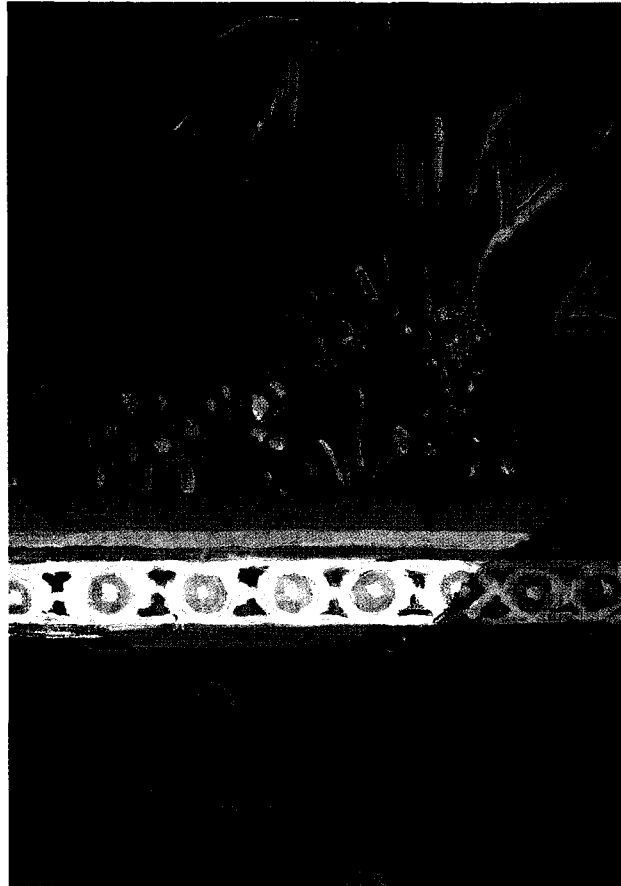
"Look, Margaret," Dad said. "Built-in shelves!"

Dad led the way into the library, admiring the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. He then posed himself with his back to the fireplace and actually clasped his hands behind his back. The agent smiled.

"Does it work?" Mom asked, nodding at the fireplace.

"Of course it works," Dad said.

"Yes, it works," the agent said. She led us back through the foyer and across the living room to a set of French doors. They opened onto the back yard. She opened the doors and displayed the yard with an upheld hand. "No pool," she said.



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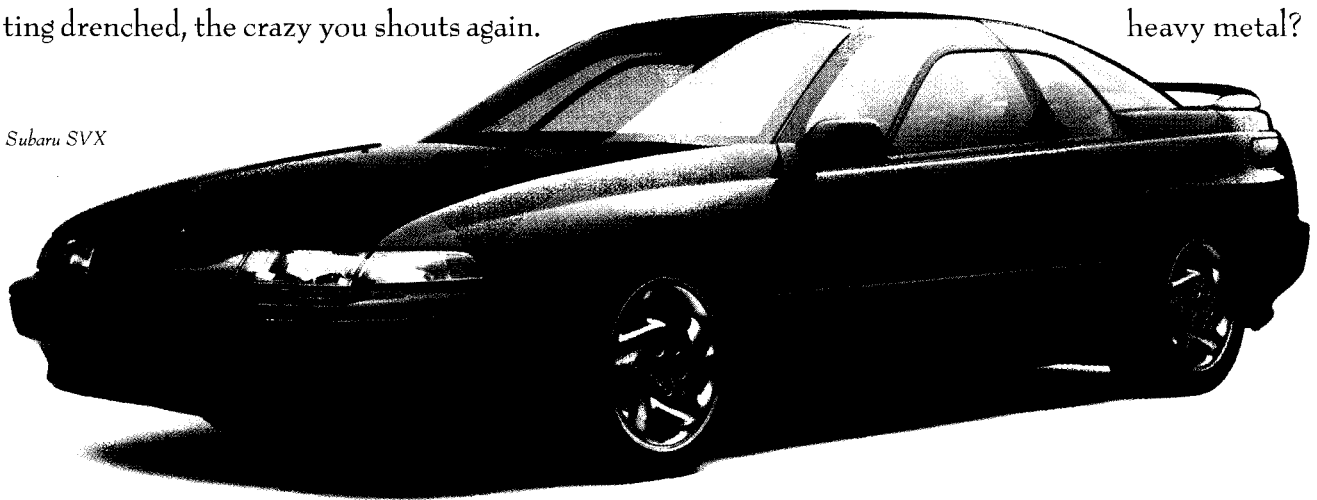
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Mom narrowed her eyes and sniffed.

By the time the tour was over, Dad was clearly in love with the crumbling old house. He went on and on about its charm and scale and what a wonderful place it would be to entertain. Mom was pointedly silent. When we got to the foyer, Dad said he thought we should make an offer. Mom paused in the middle of a step, took Dad's arm, and smiled sweetly at the real-estate agent. "Could we have a moment?" she asked.

The agent said she would wait in the car; we could just close the door behind us when we were finished. The minute she got out of sight, Mom exploded.

"I can't believe you, Richard," she said. "Here you are, ready to make an offer. Look at this place! It's huge."

Dad looked confused. "I thought you wanted space," he said.

"Space, not a warehouse," Mom said. "This place is so old, I'll bet anything it has a million things that need repairing, old rotted this and that and rusted pipes and whatnot. You can't just make an offer. This place should be surveyed by a professional. We don't know what we'd be getting into. And why has it been on the market for months if it's such a good deal? Just imagine cleaning it!"

Dad appeared to be dumbfounded. "Well . . .," he said. "I thought . . ."

APHRODITE AND THE NATURE OF ART

I want a net made of iron to hold
what I am. I love artifice.

Hephaestus made the net that hoisted up
his wife, Aphrodite, and her lover.

Caught them in their gleaming hardness,
all ecstasy and soft, most secret flesh.

Good, she thought, at the root of her being
as she locks her ankles around the gardenia
that she is. While the two men yelled
at each other, the women filed out of the room
full of chaos as well as shape. Their husbands
standing amazed at what they were seeing,
the wonderful fish-like economy of her lower back
seeing the links pressing into her body's delight
leaving their imprint rose-colored on her
pale flesh. Hair swelling through some of the gaps
as the crippled maker raised them like a masterpiece
higher in the half-light of the vast room.

—Linda Gregg

"You didn't think," she said, turning and walking out the door.

After a moment Dad looked at me and shrugged. I shrugged back. "Looked okay to me," I said.

THAT NIGHT DAD WENT ON ONE OF HIS HORRIBLE benders. Mom and I sat in the living room talking in hushed voices, and every now and then Dad would come walking through in his boxer shorts with a crystal water glass in his hand. He'd nod his head to acknowledge us. Once he said, "Still up?"

"I don't want him going with us," Mom was saying. "He gets so upset, and then this. I'm afraid he'll have a heart attack."

"He's going to feel awful in the morning," I said.

"I hope he's alive in the morning," Mom said. "I always go in there wondering."

After a moment I suggested that I stay with Dad while Mom went house-hunting alone. "I mean, if it upsets him that much."

"You know your father," Mom said. "There's no way he'll let me go alone."

"Why don't we commit him to a mental institution for a week?" I said. "We'll say it's a case of temporary insanity—ours, if we don't get him out of our hair."

Mom laughed. Then she sighed. "I wish I could," she said.

At that moment I noticed something dark on the floor.

"What's that?" I said. "Look."

It was a bloody footprint. Looking down the room I saw another, and another, and another, a whole series of bloody footprints leading to my father's room.

"He probably dropped a glass and cut himself," Mom said, not getting up. "He's done it before."

I went to the pantry where we kept the liquor, looked around, and came back out. "No sign of any glass," I said. Mom got out of her chair and we headed toward Dad's room. We knocked, heard a grunt, and pushed open the door. Mom gasped. The whole bottom half of Dad's bed was soaked with blood. Dad was lying there reading, completely oblivious.

Twelve hours later we stood at the foot of Dad's hospital bed. Mom was shaking her head. "You really are a strange and stubborn person," she said. Dad looked sheepish.

His feet, it turned out, were horribly infected after being gouged deep and long by two fierce ingrown toenails that had actually imbedded themselves nearly half an inch into the pulp of his big toes. Apparently he'd been trying to dig out the ingrown toenails with a nail file when he drunkenly stabbed himself in the ankle deep enough to require three stitches. Then, it seems, he'd given up his efforts at home surgery, dabbed at the

wound with his sheet, and gone to get another drink.

We left Dad in his private room and walked down the hall with Dr. Joe.

"It's really not that serious," he said. "What's surprising is that he let it get that bad—he must have been in pain for months. Anyway, I can have him out of here tomorrow."

Mom's reaction was instantaneous. "Oh, no," she said.

Dr. Joe looked at her curiously. His hair was going prematurely white—he wasn't much more than thirty—and that, combined with his stodgy bedside manner and the medicinal smell he gave off, made him seem almost as old as his patients.

"Can't you keep him for a while?" Mom said.

Dr. Joe laughed. There were people waiting for the bed, sick people, he said. He had no right to mislead an adult patient about his true condition. Besides, Dad would kill him if he ever found out.

"If he keeps drinking the way he has been," Mom said, "he won't live long enough to kill you."

Dr. Joe puffed out his lips and clasped his hands, tapping his thumbs together.

"You know how he is about spending money," Mom continued. "This house thing has got him rattled so; I've never seen him like this. If you could just keep him for a week, we could buy something and it would be over."

Dr. Joe pondered. "He really shouldn't be drinking with his EKG," he said.

"He smokes two packs a day," Mom said.

"More like three," I offered.

Dr. Joe nodded and said that maybe keeping Dad for a week's detox wouldn't be such a bad idea. He was amazed that the old man survived the things he put his body through, he said. Maybe a week in the hospital would put the fear of God into him.

Mom said she thought that was a great idea.

When we got back to his room, Dad was offering his pathetic smile to a nurse, who was shaking her head and saying no, no, no. "*¿Por favor?*" Dad said, holding up a finger and speaking in a voice full of mock anguish. "*Solamente uno, solamente uno.*"

"*Eres un hombre muy malo, Señor Sinclair,*" the nurse said, shaking her finger back at him. "*Tu sabes aquí no se puede fumar.*"

He was begging for a cigarette.

With Dad in the hospital, house-hunting became much more efficient. Instead of touring every house at length (Dad thought that saying no at first glance would insult the agent), Mom took a quick walk through and said it would never do. In this way we got through three or four houses in a morning. During the afternoons I would visit Dad and tell him about the day. Though he would never admit it, the old man seemed relieved to be out of the picture. Most of the time when I came in, he was flirting with a nurse, playing the pitiful invalid to cadge a cigarette or a smile. The nurses seemed to get a

big kick out of him; the lecture Dr. Joe had apparently given him had worked, giving him an apologetic, sheepish quality that made him, I had to admit, pretty damn lovable.

I learned not to dwell on the specifics of a house; some detail was sure to set Dad off. I tried to stay vague and bright. When things got tense, I diverted the subject to my latest scheme for making money: I was thinking of importing fire agates to the States with the help of a Mexican kid I had met at the tennis club. Dad was always pleased when I showed signs of entrepreneurial enthusiasm. But he seemed happiest of all when I told him I didn't like any of the houses we'd seen that day, as if that were a sign of our toughness as buyers. He was very concerned that we were not tough buyers.

Mostly we played chess. Once or twice I beat him, and Dad praised my playing. "You're a natural player," he said. But he added immediately that I was too hasty, too impatient, and the unhappy speculations these criticisms raised about my future turned him dark for the day.

Once, he told me I was growing up "to be a fine young man," which left me in shock.

FOUR DAYS AFTER DAD ENTERED THE HOSPITAL, the real-estate agent told us that another house had become available in Rancho Contento. It was an emergency sale, solidly below the market price, and another buyer was already interested. We drove right out. It was the Pink House. Mom loved it at first sight—the gazebo and cactus garden out front, the faded pink paint a perfect pastel against the white wrought-iron bars on the windows, the sun-room that doubled as an entrance, the arched brick ceilings (also white), the red-tile floors, the flagstone back porch with its awning heavy with vines, the narrow staircase to the roof choked with bougainvillea, the swimming pool with inlaid angelfish winking from the bottom, bubbles of white tile rising from their mouths. It was a lovely place, a true oasis, abstracted by high white walls from the dust and tumult of Mexico.

"It's lovely," Mom said. The agent watched us with a knowing smile.

Without showing any particular enthusiasm (she was canny in that way), Mom asked the agent about price and closing costs and so on. It was selling for around eighty thousand, which was at least ten and probably fifteen thousand dollars below the going price for that much house in that neighborhood.

As we drove away, Mom asked me what I thought.

"It's nice," I said.

"Did you see the kitchen?"

"Lots of space."

"The yard?"

"Dad'll freak about that pool."

Mom gave her head a little impatient shake and actual-

ly said *pooh*. She nodded her head several times and gripped the steering wheel. "I'm going to make an offer," she said very firmly.

A few days later we were ready. Back at the hospital, I went in to talk to Dad first—the shock troops in Mom's battle plan. "Build it up," she had told me. And I did. "It's really beautiful, Dad," I said. "It's like the perfect house."

"You say it's pink?" Dad asked, frowning.

"Yeah. You can paint it if you don't like it."

He seemed very skeptical. "Yeh," he repeated, mocking my diction in a blatant attempt to stall for time.

"You're focusing on the negative," I said. "You can paint a Goddamn house. The point is, Mom's in love with it, and it's really a great house. It's everything you wanted. It's even cheap."

"I wouldn't call eighty thousand dollars cheap."

Patience, I told myself. "You'd pay twice that in Chaptapeac," I said.

Dad shook his head, dubious about my statement and the general state of the world.

"But the Rancho," Dad said. "I really don't think your mother will like being so remote."

"Dad! She loves it! She's the one who wants to move there! And you're the one who wants to save money! It's perfect! You're driving me crazy!"

Dad continued to shake his head. "I don't know."

"Dad! You haven't even seen it!"

Calm down, I told myself. This is not productive. Dad lifted his hand to his mouth and laid his fingers against his lips.

"It's hard for me to think," he said, indicating with a slight wave the absent cigarette.

"Blackmailer," I said.

He smiled.

Mom and Dr. Joe were waiting out in the hall. Mom gave me a questioning look. I shrugged. "He wants a cigarette."

"The condemned man," Mom answered wryly, un-snapping her purse and pulling out her pack. Dr. Joe shook his head and said he couldn't approve of this at all, but he seemed amused. We all trooped into the room, me in front holding the cigarette forward like a white flag. Dad snatched it as soon as I got within range. He examined it. "I shouldn't smoke this," he said.

He wasn't talking about health. Mom had given me one of her American cigarettes, which cost twice as much as the local brands. Dad was offended by the lapse in his sterling record of self-denial. But he lit it anyway and leaned back in his pillows, inhaling deeply and gratefully.

"A pink house," he said, shaking his head at the world's infinite peculiarity.

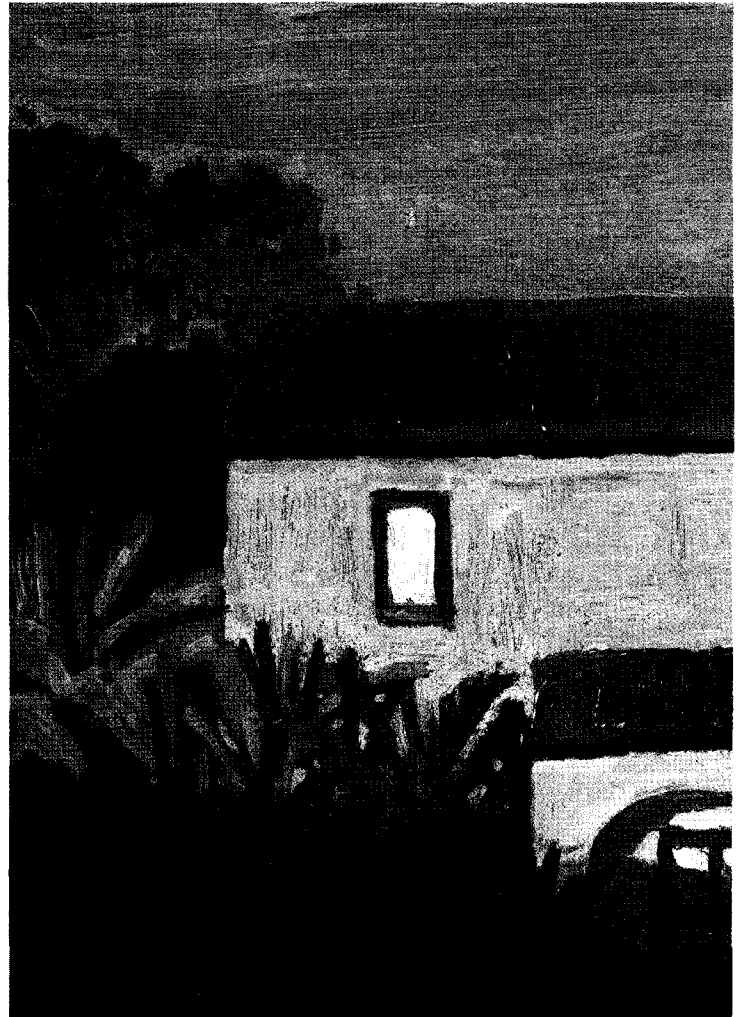
Mom pulled a chair up to the bed and sat down, all business. She'd been hard at work since finding the house, and already the offer had been accepted and the

purchase contract had been vetted by our lawyer. It was now in an envelope in the purse on her lap, waiting for Dad's signature.

"A pink house," Dad repeated. "It sounds like something for a chorus girl."

Mom made the *pooh* sound.

"I'll tell you right now," he continued, taking another deep drag on his cigarette. "I will not live in a pink house. I will never live in a pink house."



WE RETURNED THE NEXT DAY WITH Frankie. "Look at the fabulous invalid," Frankie said as he swept into the room. "I hear you're flirting shamelessly with all the nurses."

"Oh, no, not me," Dad said, too heartily. "I'm too damned old."

He didn't look well. His toes, however, poking from the bottom of the sheet so that the infection would get air, had gone back to nearly a normal color.

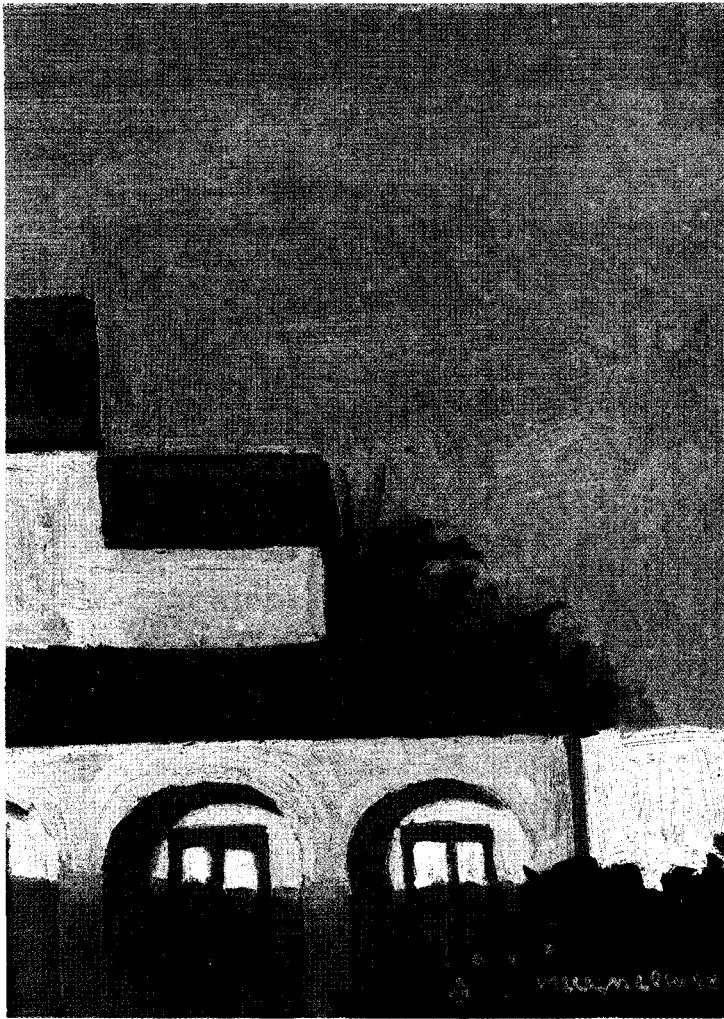
"You look like hell," Frankie said. Dad chuckled weakly, and Frankie leaned over the bed and pulled something out of his pocket. I saw the flash of glass. "Don't abuse it," Frankie said. It was a half pint of vodka.

Dad looked puzzled at first, and then smiled with touching gratitude.

"So, have you heard about your gorgeous new house?"

Dad pushed the bottle under the covers and reached for his bedside glass. "Can you empty this for me?" he said. As I headed for the bathroom, Dad turned to Frankie and answered, "I don't know about that."

"I saw it this morning," Frankie said. "It is really, truly a beautiful place—you will absolutely love it. The yard!



The garden! And I'm telling you, as an investment you couldn't do better. You know they're expanding the shopping center and building a whole new development between Oblatos and the turnoff—that whole part of town is coming up faster than downtown Dallas."

"Margaret didn't tell me about a development," Dad said, taking the empty glass I held out. He clamped it between his legs, unscrewed the vodka top, and poured out a fist of booze.

"Well," Frankie said, his tone forgiving. "She's just in love with that house."

"What about the neighborhood?" Dad asked, taking a grateful first sip.

I slipped out and went to the office, where Mom sat

gossiping with Dr. Joe. "How're they doing?" Mom asked.

I shrugged. "He's listening."

Mom shook her head, a gesture at once understanding and a little bitter. She knew exactly what I meant. Dad would give Frankie the respectful attention he could never give a member of his own family.

It took a few more days. Dr. Joe helped too, painting the house as an oasis where Dad could finally find the peace to reform. In the end Dad was ready to sign the papers. Dr. Joe and Frankie were there to give last-minute support. Mom handed Dad a pen.

"I need a cigarette," he said.

"Richard . . .," Dr. Joe scolded.

"For God's sake," Dad said. "It's a huge amount of money."

"Oh, give the poor man a cigarette," Frankie said. Mom opened her pack and handed Dad a cigarette.

"Two," Dad said.

She gave him two.

THE NEXT DAY I WENT TO PICK DAD UP. DR. Joe was finally releasing him. I wondered if Dad knew that the whole hospital stay was just a vicious conspiracy by his family and friends to force him into buying a house he really didn't want to buy. He seemed frail as he walked to the car, bent from the week in bed. He shuffled; maybe his feet still hurt him. His head hung. I could see his gray hair clumped against his neck, which seemed as rough as elephant skin. It made me feel tender and sad. I opened the car door and held back a branch so that the old man could squeeze into the shotgun seat. It took a few long moments.

"Let's go visit the house on the way," I suggested. "Have a look at what you bought."

"Oh, no, son," Dad said. "I don't . . ."

"Come on, Dad," I pleaded. I wanted to be there with him, see the pink house through his eyes. I wanted him to like it and be happy. "Mom gave me the key."

He said okay. We didn't talk much as we drove out to the Rancho. Finally I pulled the car up outside the wall and helped Dad to the gate. I unlocked it and pushed it open and stood back. "Ta da," I said.

For a moment he just stood there, looking through the gate at the faded pink house. His face showed no reaction, but his eyes were hooded and a bit sad. There was a little foreboding in them, a little anxiety. In the flame tree that rose above the gazebo to the left, a bird trilled a long series of notes. The tree was in flower, and Dad, looking up in the direction of the bird, let his eyes linger on the bright orange blooms. Then he looked back at the house where he would live until he died. He sighed once and began walking toward it, moving past me without a word, composed and ready to inspect his fate. □

Isn't it time to stop and start cleaning up

SUPERFUND ISN'T WORKING.

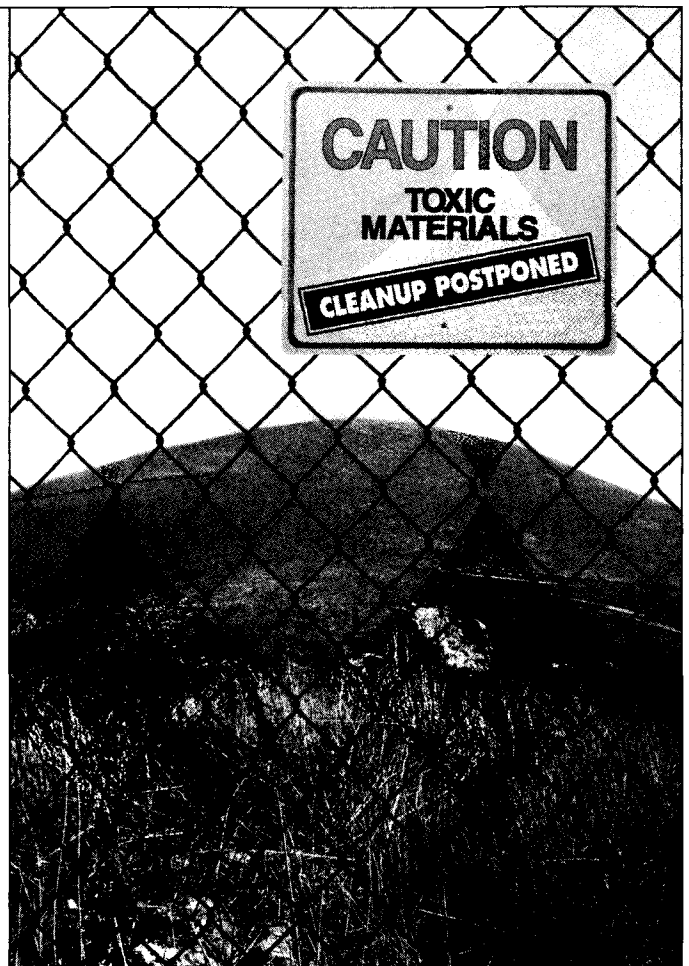
For more than a decade, the Federal Superfund program, designed to clean up America's waste sites, has been a gold mine for lawyers and consultants.

Billions have been spent on Superfund since 1980, but cleanup has been completed at fewer than 5 percent of the nation's 1,200 most dangerous waste sites.

Where has the money gone? An enormous amount has been spent arguing and litigating over who should pay for cleanup. When Congress created Superfund, it envisioned fast, efficient cleanups that would be funded by finding those responsible at each and every site and making them pay. While this sounds good in theory, in reality this approach has buried Congress's vision under an avalanche of litigation and expensive, lengthy negotiations.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

First, many sites were created by waste disposal that took place 20, 30 or 40 years ago, or even longer. This can make identifying everyone connected with a site—finding records to prove who has owned and operated it, who sent what waste, how much and where—expensive and time-consuming.



Second, Superfund holds anyone who has ever owned, used or transported waste to a site liable for the entire cost of cleanup, even if no laws were broken at the time and even if they contributed only a tiny fraction of the waste. This forces those identified at Superfund sites—whether they be large corporations, small businesses, local governments, hospitals,

p wasting millions America's waste sites?

universities or even individuals—to spend more time and money looking for others to share the costs.

With cleanup costs averaging \$26 million per site and some sites costing in the hundreds of millions, it's little wonder that organizations and private parties spend years in negotiations and litigation. In fact, at some sites, more money is spent on determining who will pay than on cleanup itself. This does a lot for lawyers and consultants but very little for the environment.

Even the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commented, "One of the sad truths about the program is that so much money has gone to people in three-piece suits and not moon suits."

IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING BETTER: THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST FUND.

Superfund's goal of cleaning up the environment has been badly undercut by this fund-raising system. The result has been unacceptable delays in cleanup and enormous legal and other transaction costs paid for by government, the private sector and insurers. Isn't it time to stop this waste of resources and get on with cleaning up the environment?

At AIG, we think so. America needs a system to promote fast and efficient cleanup, reduce unnecessary legal fees, spread the cost of cleanup broadly, and encourage responsible waste management practices today.

To accomplish this, we have proposed creating the National Environmental Trust Fund (NETF). The NETF would be a special fund, like the National Highway Trust Fund, dedicated only to cleaning up old Superfund sites. It would be paid for by a broad range of businesses and organizations without regard to liability.

YOU CAN HELP.

We've waited long enough and spent far too much money in the courtrooms. We're urging the President and Congress to act now by creating the NETF to improve Superfund.

If you'd like more information about the National Environmental Trust Fund and what you can do about Superfund, please write Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, American International Group, Inc., 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

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Why are there so few women in Congress? Why is it especially difficult for women to make it to the Senate? With a record number of women running for the Senate this year, our reporter takes a careful look at the obstacles in the way of women candidates—and at their emerging advantages

CRASHING THE LOCKER ROOM

BY WENDY KAMINER

IN HER THIRTEEN YEARS AS A SENATOR FROM ARKANSAS, Hattie Caraway, the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate, made only fifteen speeches on the floor. "And they say women talk all the time," she wrote in her diary, after listening to her colleagues' orations. A former housewife who inherited her husband's seat in 1931 and was re-elected to it twice, Caraway was known as Silent Hattie or The Woman Who Holds Her Tongue. "I haven't the heart to take a minute away from the men," she explained. "The poor dears love it so."

Telling me this story at the outset of an interview, Nancy Kassebaum, a Republican senator from Kansas, at first seemed like Hattie Caraway, less embittered than bemused by the male monopoly on the Senate. Although she and the Maryland Democrat Barbara Mikulski are the only two women in the Senate today, she does not, she told me, wish for more women senators so much as she wishes for more moderate Republican ones. She called herself a U.S. senator, not a woman senator, in commenting on her vote in favor of Justice Clarence Thomas's nomination to the Supreme Court, and she said she has not felt disadvantaged by her sex in any of her campaigns or committee assignments. Kassebaum sits on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, overseeing a traditional male preserve. Still, she mused, men's voices do have more authority on foreign-policy issues. "There's an indifference to the contributions one can make," she said, only a little obliquely. "What I can resent is indifference"—which apparently extends even to areas in which

women might be expected to have considerable expertise.

"I was never once asked by anyone at the White House or by any of my colleagues about how I reacted to Anita Hill's public allegations of sexual harassment or how I thought the allegations should be handled, which was kind of interesting," Kassebaum recalled.

Both Kassebaum and Mikulski, however, were invited to sit with the Judiciary Committee during the Thomas-Hill hearings. Both declined. "Barbara and I felt it would have been demeaning," Kassebaum explained. Mikulski, who voted against the Thomas confirmation, was a little more direct when I spoke with her: "I was not on the committee. It was not my job to give an imprimatur to the hearings. It was not my job to prop them up or do a whitewash."

Precisely what other role the two women senators might have played on the committee was unclear. Their invitation was issued in haste, on the morning of Hill's testimony, when Mikulski called Senator Joseph Biden to protest the proceedings. (She previously had asked for a delay to investigate the allegations.) "It was fifteen minutes before the hearings began!" she exclaimed. "I wasn't even in Washington; I was in Baltimore." Sometimes, as Nancy Kassebaum says, there's indifference.

That the Senate is indifferent to women's voices and concerns is the kindest interpretation of the Thomas-Hill hearings offered by many women. Male senators tended to ignore or trivialize the charges of sexual harassment—because, Bella Abzug, the former New York congresswoman, asserts, "they do it all the time." Abzug echoes a common refrain. "It's a way of life for them." Ellie Smeal, the founder of The Fund for the Feminist Majority, is blunter, recalling what a male lobbyist once told her about male legislators: "They fish together, they hunt together, they play cards together, and they whore together."

Whether or not outrage over the Thomas-Hill hearings is confined to politically active professional women, as some claim, whether or not that outrage will affect the upcoming election (it has already cost Alan Dixon, an Illinois Democrat who voted for Thomas, his seat, and may defeat Arlen Specter, of Pennsylvania, as well), whether or not the public had its collective consciousness raised by Hill's story and the commentaries it engendered, the televised hearings provided an emotionally charged image of the Senate as an exclusive club for white males of a certain age. The committee looked like an aging former football team from some segregated suburban school.

Of course, the exclusion of women from Congress is not exactly news; it's history. Only fourteen women have ever served in the U.S. Senate, and the majority of them inherited their husbands' seats or were appointed for limited terms by governors with whom they had political or personal connections. (Two governors have appointed their wives to vacant Senate seats: Edwin Edwards, of Louisiana, in 1972; and Bibb Graves, of Alabama, in 1937.) Only 117 women have served in the House since

its inception. Out of 11,230 people who have served in Congress, only one percent have been women. Today there are two women in the Senate and twenty-eight women in the House (out of 435 members). In other words, women constitute 5.6 percent of Congress, an increase of only about three percentage points since 1971. Women have made considerably more progress at the state and local level, suggesting that they face a glass ceiling in politics, as they do in corporate life.

But statistics are a bore; the Thomas-Hill hearings were enthralling, to partisans on either side. "I was as enraptured by the hearings as anyone," Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin recalls. "They were sirenlike." In a post-literate age the video images of the Judiciary Committee were also powerfully persuasive; they dramatized the homogeneity of the Senate more than statistics and polemics ever could.

Someday Clarence Thomas's most fervent opponents may thank him for his help in electing women to the Senate. As an organizing tool, the Thomas-Hill hearings may do for women politicians in the 1990s what *Roe v. Wade* did for the New Right in the seventies. The dramatic upset primary victories of the senatorial candidates Carol Moseley Braun, in Illinois, and Lynn Yeakel, in Pennsylvania; the record number of women running for the Senate and the House; and record amounts of money pouring into women's campaigns have been among the biggest political stories of the year. Both Braun and Yeakel attribute their candidacies to the Senate hearings. Not only did the hearings make a lot of women angry but they "demystified the Senate," Braun says. "Instead of dignified men debating lofty issues, the public saw garden-variety politicians making bad speeches."

The Problems Women Face

WHY ARE GARDEN-VARIETY POLITICIANS invariably male? Why aren't more women in the Senate? You might also ask, Why aren't more women in corporate boardrooms, or at partnership meetings of major law firms?

You can usually predict the response to the question about women in the Senate (or the boardroom) if you know your respondent's ideology. Liberal Democrats and feminists talk about the ways in which women have been kept out of power by bias. Conservative Republicans and other traditionalists are likely to say that women have opted out, following a natural inclination to stay home. Moderates tend to focus on "structural" obstacles to women's political advancement—the power of incumbency and the fact that having entered political life in significant numbers relatively recently, women are still making their way up the hierarchy; women lack "bench strength," they say inside the Beltway. (The same explanation is often given for women's secondary status in the corporate world.)

The structural explanation sounds appealingly objective and is no doubt partly true, but it takes you back to your starting point. Why weren't women more active politically thirty years ago? Were they kept out of power or did they opt out, naturally? Do we have any

basis for asserting what comes naturally to women when their choices have long been so unnaturally constrained?

The reasons for women's absence from the Senate are, of course, at least as complicated as the reasons for their absence from the upper echelons of most high-status professions. Socialization, custom, the division of labor within the home, access to contraception, some degree of choice, and, I suspect, considerable bias all play their roles. "The last time anything was simple, you were eight years old," Lynn Martin reminded me.

But to simplify just a little: Among political women and the experts who study them there is a clear consensus about the problems women candidates have traditionally faced. Again, people perceive bias through the scrim of ideology. More-conservative women candidates are likely to present it as a relatively minor problem; more-liberal candidates are likely to present it as a major one.

Talking to women from both parties, however, you hear complaints and observations about bias that are familiar to most professional women:

Women have a harder time than men establishing their credibility as candidates, because our traditional images of political leadership are male (along with our traditional images of trial lawyers and neurosurgeons). According to the Democratic pollster Celinda Lake, whose studies on women candidates are widely cited by Democrats, the credibility problem has "three prongs"—competence, electability, and toughness.

Men are presumed to be competent; women must prove they're competent. (Women internalize this message, some suggest, and think they have to be qualified to run; men just run.)

Women must also prove that they're viable candidates, capable of waging winning campaigns. This problem of proving electability is circular: women need to prove their viability to raise money, but they can't show that they're viable until they've raised money.

Women have a hard time proving that they're tough enough. Voters want candidates who will fight for them, but women who present themselves as fighters are likely to be considered strident, at best, or bitchy. Celinda Lake has observed, with apparently unintended poignancy, that a woman can also effectively establish toughness by pointing to some personal tragedy she's managed to overcome.

In addition to these general credibility problems (which seem to be lessening), women candidates also cite

THE THOMAS-HILL hearings provided an emotionally charged image of the Senate. The committee looked like an aging former football team from some segregated suburban school.

particular, familiar manifestations of bias. They commonly complain that the press pays too much attention to a woman's appearance. Josie Heath, a 1990 and 1992 Democratic senatorial candidate from Colorado, notes that she can describe her wardrobe by reading her campaign clips. Women are also plagued by questions about their marital status, no matter what it is. That a husband can be a serious liability was clearly shown by Geraldine Ferraro's vice-presidential campaign; Dianne Feinstein, the former mayor of San Francisco, and Josie Heath were also questioned about their husbands' finances. But the absence of a husband can be a liability too. Women candidates are "penalized by marriage," Barbara Mikulski says. "If you're married, you're neglecting the guy; if you're divorced, you couldn't keep him; if you're a widow, you killed him; if you're single, you couldn't get a man."

These problems of bias and the facts of family life underlie the primary structural obstacles to women's political advancement. Women tend to start their political careers later than men, after their children are grown, and so have less time to position themselves politically. Their place in the hierarchy and the presumption that women are not competent or electable make it difficult for them to raise money, and until recently fund-raising was cited as one of women's primary political problems. Fund-raising difficulties also reflect sex segregation throughout the job market (which is related, of course, to divisions of labor at home). Clustered in lower-paying jobs, women have less money to give to their candidates and causes. "Women tend to give in smaller amounts, and they give ideologically. They give for abortion rights or because they want to see someone fighting for Anita Hill," the Democratic consultant Nikki Heidepriem remarks. "Men tend to give for economic reasons, with an eye on the bottom line. The big money comes from entrepreneurs and corporate types who do business in Washington, and they tend not to be women."

The Parties as Locker Rooms

SO WHAT? SOME MEN, AND WOMEN, READERS ARE probably impatient by now with these laments. Male candidates are not all well connected; they, too, have trouble raising money, challenging incumbents, and receiving what they consider fair treatment from the press. Appearance and image matter for

men as well—graduate students in men's studies could write treatises on the politics of baldness. Minority men can probably point to at least as much bias as white women can (and have even less representation in the Senate). The generalizations about the special problems of women candidates are only generalizations. Each candidate has his or her own combination of advantages and disadvantages, involving not just sex and race or ethnicity but also geography, ideology, telegenicity, shrewdness, wit, personal history, and luck. Women complaining of bias don't deny this. They do claim that although the factors in each race are different, the balance of factors, particularly in statewide and federal elections, generally favors men.

The party apparatuses and operatives also favor men, particularly in the eyes of Democratic women. Republican women candidates don't as a rule offer much public criticism of their party, except perhaps on the issue of abortion. Democratic women don't as a rule offer much praise; instead, many scoff at the suggestion that their party is doing enough for women.

Levels of mistrust are high. Jane Danowitz, of the Women's Campaign Fund, is convinced that Dianne Feinstein would not have had a primary challenge in her bid this year for the California senate had she been a man. "Feinstein almost won the 1990 California gubernatorial race. She was the party's standard-bearer. Had she been a man, they would have cleared the field." Who's they? "You can start with George Mitchell [the Senate majority leader] and Chuck Robb [the head of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee]. There is an old-boys' network that could have dried up the money for any other candidate entering the race." Kam Kuwata, Feinstein's campaign manager, dismisses this suggestion (as do a few other political women). The political director of the DSCC, Don Foley, stresses that the national party stays out of primary battles (as it is required to do). "They stay out officially but they go in the back door when they want," Danowitz charges.

The old boys, however, are beginning to change their ways, Danowitz adds. Since January of this year the DSCC has been holding unprecedented meetings with the women's political community and showing increasing concern for women candidates. Given the remarkable momentum of women this year, a resurgence of feminism, and a pervasive disgust for incumbents, it's fair to

call this a foxhole conversion. Given the history of party politics, redemption may not be so easy.

Whether or not they believe that the party in effect conspires against them, women often describe it as a locker room. At the national level "both parties take a very conventional approach to recruitment," according to Anita Dunn, an aide to New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley and a former senior staffer at the DSCC. "They look at the governors and the visible congressmen. Recruitment is a very subjective process, depending on the same small, predominantly male circles. And if you're a Democrat, the conventional wisdom is that you shouldn't run a candidate who's perceived as liberal, as are most Democratic women in the House." Sometimes, Dunn adds, "liberal" is a code word for "woman."

At the state level the locker room is smaller and perhaps even more firmly established. New Jersey Republican Christine Todd Whitman, who ran a surprisingly close race against Bradley in 1990, believes that if the party had thought it had any chance of defeating Bradley, it never would have nominated a woman to run against him.

"All politics is local, and at the local level there's a group that says, 'We'll run Bob. He's my buddy,'" Colorado Congresswoman Pat Schroeder says. Schroeder recalls the party's "anointment" of Tim Wirth for the Senate seat that Gary Hart vacated in 1986. She had been in Congress longer than Wirth but, she says, was not even considered for the seat. "The party regulars said, 'We'll run Tim, he's our candidate, because it's so hard on him, having to raise money to run for the House every two years'—as if it's easy for me."

The implication of bias in Schroeder's story may or may not be fair, but it indicates a pervasive view of the parties as men's clubs in which women are only tokens. That view has led at least a few Democratic women to demand affirmative-action plans for candidates. "The parties say, 'We don't discriminate; women can run,'" Bella Abzug observes. "But we're running against the tide of history. It's not enough to say 'We don't discriminate.'" Women advanced professionally partly because of affirmative action, the argument goes; they may not advance politically without it.

In fact the Democratic Party does have an affirmative-action plan for delegates; devising a plan for candidates is a bit more problematic (as well as extremely unpopular).

Affirmative-action plans for candidates may be feasible only in parliamentary systems, in which the parties run slates of candidates. But Abzug has a suggestion—or, rather, a demand. She has recently helped launch a campaign calling on the parties to

WOMEN CAN HARDLY *avoid stressing the qualities attributed to them which voters find appealing, but they have to stress them carefully, in very particular ways.*

nominate only women for open seats. "This may not be the idea that will do it, but I'm trying to get people to think creatively. I want people to be more creative and demanding."

Meanwhile, according to one Democratic consultant, "The Democratic Party has all it can do to get out of bed in the morning. You can say it's not doing much for women, but it's not doing much of anything at all. Apart from fund-raising, which is important, collecting some data, and holding an occasional conference, the best thing the Democratic Party can do is get out of the way."

The Republican Advantage

WHETHER OR NOT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY has the will to promote women, it lacks the means. "The Republicans have a recruitment budget; we don't," says Don Foley, of the DSCC. The political consultant Ann Lewis explains that the Republicans also have an organizational advantage when it comes to promoting women. "The Republican Party is a top-down hierarchy with centralized fund-raising. The Democratic Party is best understood as a federation of state parties. The only truly national Democratic operation is the presidential selection process. Everything else is run state by state, and some states are surer, swifter, and richer than others."

Because they had more resources and more control over their own system, Republicans made more progress recruiting women in the early 1980s, according to Lewis, who used to recruit for the Democrats. "My Republican counterpart would go to candidates and say, 'We'll get the nomination. We'll max on funding.' I'd say, 'Look, it's going to be a lot of fun, but you're going to have to fight for the nomination, and maybe I can get you a dollar.'"

Republicans also had more incentive to recruit women candidates after the gender gap appeared, in 1980, showing that women were more likely to vote Democratic. According to Kathy Wilson, a board member of the National Republican Coalition for Choice, "The gender gap scared them to death. The appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor was no accident. Republicans are shrewd, and they realize they need women to temper the Republican image." Republicans, because "they are better marketers than Democrats," are interested in fielding women, Ann Lewis says, summing things up. "Democrats think of politics as organizing. Republicans think of politics as marketing."

But Republicans have had the same problem marketing women candidates that Democrats might have had marketing SDI. The party has a credibility problem on women's issues. Running as a Republican can be a disadvantage to women candidates who seek support from women voters concerned with such issues as abortion, family leave, and health care. Claudine Schneider, a for-

mer congresswoman from Rhode Island who unsuccessfully challenged the incumbent senator Claiborne Pell in 1990, is convinced that she would have fared better as a Democrat. "Many women believe the myth that Republicans are bad for women and Democrats are good for them," she says. Lynn Martin, who lost a 1990 Senate race in Illinois to the incumbent Democrat Paul Simon, reports a similar disadvantage among women voters: "One group of voters won't vote for you because you're a woman; another group of women voters won't vote for you because you're a Republican." (Martin does not attribute her loss to bias; like Claudine Schneider, she was up against a popular incumbent.)

"The Republican Party is interested in the concept of promoting women, but they have an ideology problem," Ann Lewis says. During the 1980s the party's primary electorate became increasingly conservative—anti-abortion and strongly in favor of "traditional" family roles—and resistant to electing women. Democrats have no similar ideology problem, but they have financial and organizational problems and, it seems, lack the requisite marketing skills—the ability to dramatize their message.

The Difficulty of Telling Their Own Stories

A CAMPAIGN IS A MORALITY PLAY, IN THE VIEW OF Larry K. Smith, a former manager of a presidential and several senatorial campaigns, and now counselor to the House Armed Services Committee. "A campaign is a contest over values and norms, not issues," he says. "Every campaign is a story about the candidate and the nation." The Democratic Party has distanced itself from voters, Smith suggests, by taking a "literalist" approach to campaigning, rather than a dramatic one. Instead of telling a first-person story about values, it has told a third-person story about issues.

Whether this is an accurate assessment of the Democratic Party in general (and not just of the Dukakis campaign), it does provide a useful perspective on women in politics. Women candidates have stories to tell different from men's, because, like it or not, they represent to voters different visions of authority and different values.

The primary storytellers in campaigns, however, aren't candidates but their media consultants—the majority of whom are men. They tend to imagine campaigns in ways that are inapposite to many women: their favorite campaign metaphors involve football and war; they tend to see themselves as hired guns. The consultant Wendy Sherman, a partner in the Washington firm Doak, Shrum, Harris, Sherman, Donilon and one of few women at the top of her field, suggests that the failures of male consultants to women are failures of imagination: "Consultants often get caught up in what is conventionally wise, and generally what's conventionally wise is what white men believe—because there are more of them inside the Beltway in positions of power."

DESPITE THE HORROR stories, prospects for women candidates seem to be dramatically improving. Women have impressive new fund-raising networks, and political outsiders are in vogue.

That men's conventional wisdom sometimes misconceives women's political potential was demonstrated by Barbara Mikulski's successful 1986 Senate campaign. She was a popular congresswoman seeking an open seat in a contested primary, but "people inside the Beltway said she could not become a senator," Sherman, who was Mikulski's campaign manager in 1986, told me. "She didn't look like a senator, she didn't act like a senator, she didn't sound like a senator." For voters, however, that turned out to be the essence of her appeal. Sherman explained, "They looked at her and said, 'She's ours, and we may finally have a voice in the U.S. Senate, and we don't look like senators either.'"

The connection voters felt to Mikulski partly reflected her history of service in the House, Sherman added, but it also reflected and was strengthened by her sex. That women candidates seem more accessible to voters is indeed part of the new conventional wisdom; it's evidenced by the tendency to call women in authority by their first names.

Because women are expected to be more nurturant than men, one of the biggest mistakes for a woman candidate, according to experts, is running harshly negative ads. A frequently cited horror story about a woman's campaign and a male consultant involves a series of negative ads that Bob Squier produced for Harriett Woods in her unsuccessful 1986 Senate campaign in Missouri—the "crying-farmer spots."

These were a series of interviews with a farmer and his wife suffering a foreclosure by an insurance company whose board included Woods's opponent, Kit Bond. Run as a dramatic three-part serial (like an AT&T commercial), the ad included a shot of the farmer breaking down and sobbing as he talked about losing his cows. It concluded with freeze frames of the farmer and Kit Bond, and attacked Bond for opposing a moratorium on farm foreclosures.

Woods and her staff initially opposed Squier's advice to air the spots early in the campaign. Then, against her better judgment, Woods says, she "caved in." She ran the ad, and it sparked a controversy that badly damaged her campaign. The local press was critical; the ad was deemed unfair and exploitative. Squier's partner, William Knapp, concedes that "the ad did not work as well as we would have liked," but believes that had Woods stayed on the attack, she would have prevailed. Instead, she

fired Squier, her campaign seemed to be in trouble, and that became a story in itself. Woods believes that the image of an "inept" woman candidate who couldn't keep her own campaign in order resonated with voters and political elites.

Woods, now the president of the National Women's Political Caucus, does not believe that she lost the election simply because of the ad—"1986 was a year in which factory workers stayed home or voted Republican." She is no longer "brooding" about her loss, but in talking about Squier and the crying-farmer controversy, she stiffens with anger. Her mistake, she says, was not in firing Squier, as one spin on the story suggested; it was in hiring him. She was uneasy about his style and his understanding of her identity from the beginning: "I worried that he didn't care who I was; he could talk to me and never listen. So I arranged a lunch with him. I thought, If he knows who I am, I can trust him to translate it. We had the lunch, and he talked the whole time about himself."

Women's tales of male arrogance are legion in the political community, as they generally are in male-dominated occupations. You believe them or not, depending on your own experiences and sensitivities. The tales are hardly empirical evidence of bias, unconscious or intended. But they surely prove that women perceive bias and that they encounter difficulties in telling their own stories and forging their own political identities.

Despite the horror stories and the litany of complaints, however, prospects for women candidates seem to be dramatically improving. Women have impressive new fund-raising networks, which enabled them to capitalize on outraged support for Anita Hill. Political outsiders are in vogue, and optimists expect women to gain at least fifteen to twenty seats in Congress this year. In the aftermath of the Thomas-Hill hearings, at the end of the Cold War, in the midst of a recession, with battles over abortion looming in the states, the new conventional wisdom from the women's political community is upbeat. (It will sound a little pat, but that's part of its appeal.) This is what you're likely to hear today from politically active women, and some men, pollsters, organizers, consultants, and candidates, Democrats and quite a few Republicans alike.

Feminine Stereotypes

WOMEN ARE PERCEIVED AS BEING MORE HONEST than men, so they benefit from general concern about corruption. Women are outsiders, so they benefit from the anti-incumbency mood (women embody change, everyone says). Women are perceived as being more compassionate than

men and better at dealing with the quotidian domestic problems—day care, education, and potholes—that are displacing concern about communism and national defense (which men are considered better able to address).

Republicans and Democrats differ as to whether the current climate favors Republican or Democratic women. The pollster Celinda Lake says that the combined strengths of Democrats and women on domestic issues are helpful; Kathy Wilson, of the National Republican Coalition for Choice, says that the combination of Democratic and presumptively feminine values is hurtful: “Too much compassion makes people clutch at their wallets.” Republican women, she says, offer both compassion and fiscal competence—a quality that is particularly important to women. Sometimes women’s advantage on domestic issues is said to be offset by a lack of credibility on fiscal matters. But the presumption that women don’t understand budgets is usually said to be balanced by the presumption that they’re honest. The media consultant William Knapp says, “There’s a sense that a woman may not know how to fill out a general ledger sheet, but at least she won’t steal.” Ann Lewis remarks, “The stereotypes that used to work against us are now working for us.”

It is probably not realistic even to hope that women might someday win or lose elections without being helped or hurt by stereotypes. Campaigning is the art of the superficial: it’s about rhetoric, not policy, the manipulation of images, not the exchange of ideas. And, as everyone I interviewed reminded me, voters have different images of men and women: Men are tougher, et cetera. Women care more about their constituents; they’re better housekeepers—and, as Jane Addams once suggested, government is “enlarged housekeeping” on a grand scale.

The use of feminine stereotypes to advance a feminist agenda is a central, historic irony of the American women’s movement. Late-nineteenth-century social reformers like Addams and Julia Ward Howe championed what were considered feminine virtues—honesty, compassion, and heightened concern for moral behavior—arguing that women, once empowered, would bestow good government and peace upon the public. Stereotypes of femininity helped to fuel the suffrage movement, providing a rationale for women’s participation in political life. Many women sought the vote not for its own sake, as a matter of right, but as a means of achieving womanly reforms. Listening to women candidates today, you sometimes hear a similar argument for electing women to high office: with their different voices, women will foster cooperation instead of confrontation in domestic and foreign affairs; as nature’s housekeepers, women will clean up the environment.

The dangers of using stereotypes like these should be clear to generations of women who have had to prove their unfeminine ability and had to fight for the right to exercise power overtly outside the home, as well as

covertly within it. By claiming “feminine” virtues, women may effectively deprive themselves of “masculine” strengths. Whether women candidates can exploit feminine stereotypes without ultimately being defeated by them is an unasked question at the heart of many women’s campaigns.

Women politicians can hardly avoid stressing the qualities attributed to them which voters find appealing, but they have to stress them carefully, in very particular ways. “If a woman runs for governor and says, ‘I’m gentler, nicer, and like children better,’ she sounds as if she’s running for day-care supervisor,” Ann Lewis remarks. “On the other hand, what she can say is ‘I know what real life is like. I know what budgets are like, what it is like to pay hospital bills and try to make ends meet. And when I go to the governor’s office, I’ll bring that knowledge with me.’”

Voters of both parties are likely to be persuaded by this message, Celinda Lake suggests, particularly during a recession; she observes in a 1991 report, “Winning With Women,” that voters believe that women are better at “meeting the needs of the middle class.” Lake surveyed about 1,160 voters, testing their reactions to “generic” male and female Republican and Democratic candidates. (She found, for example, that a generic Democratic woman would fare better than a generic Democratic man against a generic Republican man.) The trouble with this study, of course, is that neither campaigns nor candidates are generic; if all politics is local, then every race is unique, as is every candidate.

Some women also point out that previous predictions of victories for women did not come true. They said that women would win in 1990, the Republican pollster Linda DiVall recalls, but eight women ran for the Senate and seven lost. Claudine Schneider, who lost her 1990 challenge to Claiborne Pell, says that “for the first time,” women’s political future seems “foggy.” Schneider says, “I still believed that with eight women running for Senate in 1990, at least half would be elected. When I lost, I was disappointed. When all the other women lost [except for the incumbent Nancy Kassebaum], I was devastated.”

Congresswoman Pat Schroeder, too, is less than hopeful. She says, “The same women have been talking optimism for a long time, but here we are, in 1992, and we have only twenty-eight women in the House.” Schroeder is also skeptical about assessments of the national mood and people’s preoccupation with domestic concerns. “Something like the Gulf War rolls around, and the mood changes overnight. You could change the polls in two days if you suddenly got everyone in their flight suits bombing Qaddafi. The testosterone is flowing, and everyone’s cheering—guys in the reserves put on their suits and they run the military hardware in the mall and crawl all over it. Great images.”

At the national level, Schroeder adds, the electorate’s focus shifts back and forth between domestic and inter-

national issues, and men are considered better able to handle both. In other words, men are less disadvantaged by stereotypes on domestic issues than women are on foreign policy. Schroeder says, "We'd look sillier than Dukakis in a tank."

Traditional images of women pose the stubbornest challenge on national-security issues. The challenge comes from voters who don't trust women's capacity for military command and also from within the feminist community. There is a strong, historical strain of pacifism in the women's movement, embodied by Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress. Rankin voted against the popular resolution to declare war against Germany in 1917, to the dismay of her constituents. She voted her conscience and lost her office; she was defeated in a race for Senate the following year. She never recanted her vote or her pacifism. Fifty years later she was marching to protest the Vietnam War. Rankin died in 1978, at ninety-two, having devoted much of her life to the peace movement. She is an American feminist hero; at women's rallies against the Gulf War last year, her name was invoked, along with the image of women as peacemakers.

Jeanette Rankin is, however, a problematic role model for women candidates. Not every woman will or should sacrifice her office for a symbolic vote of conscience. Not every woman will or should be a pacifist; and to advance in the Senate and into the White House, women will have to convince the voters that they're prepared to go to war.

That may seem self-evident, but within the women's community it is a highly controversial position, an unholy assertion of feminist machismo. "We would know we had the first woman candidate for President when we saw a woman senator on a battleship, reviewing the troops," Ann Lewis recalls saying to a group of women. "And someone said, 'That's terrible. Do we have to repeat the military tradition?' And I said, 'No, you don't have to repeat it. You can vote for Mother Teresa.'"

This dialogue between pragmatism and purity is a staple of the women's community. In the Rankin tradition, significant factions of women have long practiced a politics of purity, promising to reform and cleanse the world in their own image, holding women candidates to higher standards than men, and seeking, in Lewis's words, "higher visions of ourselves."

The persistence and pervasiveness of this tradition and its broad implications for electoral politics are difficult to measure. Women candidates do commonly complain, however, that they are held to higher standards by voters than men are. The political double standard, like the double standard of sexual behavior, reflects both negative and positive stereotypes of women: voters tend to have lower expectations of women's ability and higher expectations of their intent. The suspicion that women are less competent than men gives them less leeway to make mistakes. The notion that women are more moral than

men makes them more accountable for behavior that raises even minor moral questions.

In addition, women's funding networks are said by candidates and campaign managers to be tougher on their candidates than men's networks, according to a 1989 survey by Celinda Lake. And women candidates may have unrealistic expectations of their constituents, Lake suggests today. "I don't think women's interest groups are tougher; I think women candidates expect them to be easier. Running for office is a very isolating experience for a woman. Candidates want to believe they can go back to women supporters for nurturance."

In fact in recent years the women's political community has become more "tough-minded" than nurturant. In Washington, at least, pragmatism has clearly displaced purity. Organizations like EMILY's List, a Democratic fund-raising network, the National Women's Political Caucus, and the Women's Campaign Fund practice savvy, bottom-line politics, supporting only those candidates deemed to be electable. This practice is not universally acclaimed, however. Patricia Ireland, the president of the National Organization for Women, dismisses it as a "politics of scarcity" that deters qualified women from running. She prefers "flooding the ticket."

While organizations like EMILY's List and the National Women's Political Caucus represent the new insider politics for women, NOW remains on the outside, along with Ellie Smeal's Fund for the Feminist Majority. Insider women—lobbyists and consultants—often deride NOW for obstructionist ideological purity, pointing out that politics is the art of the possible; but that may not be quite fair. Activists like Ireland and Smeal view the possibilities differently. "I think we're the ones who are pragmatic," Smeal remarks.

A Women's Party?

PATRICIA IRELAND AND ELLIE SMEAL ADVOCATE the formation of a third party, not just for women but, as Ireland says, "for all people excluded from power"—a rainbow coalition of the marginal. It's hardly surprising that insider feminist women prefer to put their faith in the Democratic Party, rejecting this idea, sometimes gently and sometimes with contempt. Lynn Cutler, the vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee, calls creating a third party "the most self-destructive endeavor for women I can imagine." Pat Schroeder suggests that it's premature to talk about a third party, because "we don't yet have a second party."

Smeal isn't interested in reforming the Democratic Party, because of her firm belief that "the Republican boys and Democratic boys have more in common with each other than they do with a feminist agenda." The Democratic girls and Republican girls, she adds, have more in common with each other as well. Smeal puts her faith in sexual solidarity.

It's highly likely that since the Thomas-Hill hearings more women of both parties have sympathized with Smeal's position than had before. Linda DiVall speculates that "as a long shot," women may cross party lines in November to vote for one another. Jane Danowitz, of the Women's Campaign Fund, suggests that the hearings have lessened party loyalties for Democrats particularly and have diminished the importance of ideology in campaigns: "Before the hearings, issues like reproductive choice were paramount over gender, and there was a feeling that good men were as good as good women. But those good men failed us. We'll come of age when we realize that a mediocre woman is as good as a good man."

Smeal says she learned this lesson and came of age more than a decade ago, when she unsuccessfully lobbied the Illinois legislature to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. "We were dressed in green and the STOP-ERA women were dressed in red. We were the cheerleaders and the guys were on the field, strutting around and guffawing at their stupid sexist jokes. I woke up and saw that this was a stag game and even the good guys play it."

Smeal recalls a male United Auto Workers lobbyist explaining to her, "It doesn't matter if they're Democratic or Republican. It doesn't matter if they're liberal or con-

servative. It doesn't matter if they're pro-labor or anti-labor. What matters to them is that there's a card game in the back room and you women don't know where it is. Democrats, Republicans, liberals, and conservatives are all playing cards back there. They're afraid if they let you in, you're going to find their card game and you'll say, 'You shouldn't be back here playing cards; you should be out there working,' because that's what wives and mothers always do."

Ellie Smeal's bleak image of sexual politics is powerfully depressing. (And I don't ever want her mad at me.) She articulates some of women's worst fears about male bonding, while the hope she offers of female bonding seems less compelling.

Smeal is convinced that once there are enough women in any legislature to form a critical mass, they will vote in the interests of their sex. (Accept for the sake of argument the questionable underlying assumption that those interests are clear.) She suggests, for example, that a moderate Republican, such as Nancy Kassebaum, would be more likely to promote a feminist agenda if she were one of thirty women in the Senate rather than one of just two. Kassebaum doesn't agree. "Women don't march in lockstep, nor should they," she asserts. "It diminishes

ONE THOUSAND CRANES

What if, in answer to need or pain,
you were to fold one thousand cranes—

taking the rice-white sheets of paper
one by one in your fingers

following the now ancient pattern
once someone's new creation

folding together edges, corners,
points along a line or at the center

creating the slender body, long
neck and beak, the wings

believing with each motion
you move closer to your wish, that passion

filling your heart, white
flock aloft across the blue sky

doubting, for that is human,
for the moment what you've begun

persevering despite doubt, divine
voyage toward paradise

finishing the last fold
not once but over and over

setting each sacred bird down lightly
beside the ones already flying

counting how many you have done,
how many more are yet to come

losing count but not that memory
your hands and your heart keep

going, going over, forward toward
the end that is no end—

what would you ask to happen
that had not happened before then,

when you were at long last finished and knew
your longing and journeying are never through?

—Michael Pettit

women to say that we have one voice and everything in the Senate would change if we were there.”

Each point of view has considerable support among political women. “If we had fifty percent women in Congress instead of five percent, we’d have family and medical leave,” Patricia Ireland declares. “I don’t want women there for the sake of diversity; I want them there because I think our issues would move faster.” Madeleine Kunin, the former governor of Vermont, says she saw changes in the voting patterns of the Vermont legislature as women gained more seats. But Lynn Martin says, “You belong to your party. You don’t just vote by sex. The ballot says Lynn Martin (Rep.), not Lynn Martin (Fem.).”

The debate about the importance of sex is constant. Are you a woman candidate or a candidate who happens to be a woman or both? And how does sex interact with race or ethnicity in party politics? Carol Moseley Braun, the Democratic African-American who successfully challenged Alan Dixon in Illinois this year, says that she will “play the gender card” in a campaign, indicating to women voters that she offers them a voice on their issues, but that she will not “play the race card,” making a similar appeal to the black community. “Race is too divisive,” she explains.

Why is an appeal to sexual solidarity not divisive too? Perhaps because sexual loyalties have always been mitigated by race (and class) more than race has been mitigated by sex.

Do party loyalties also trump sex? It is axiomatic within the feminist community that if there had been more women in the Senate, the Thomas nomination would have been doomed. But half of the (two) women in the Senate voted to confirm him, and several Republican women who ran for the Senate in 1990 say they would have confirmed him too.

Probing the remarks of women from both parties, however, you find that there is more agreement about the importance of sex than first appears. Republicans who stress that women vary ideologically (usually meaning that not all women are feminists) also stress that women have perspectives different from men’s, which reflect their different life experiences and maybe even something in their nature. Republican and Democratic women often say that they would devote more attention than men to issues involving children and family life, regardless of how they would vote to address those issues.

SOME WOMEN POINT OUT *that previous predictions of victories for women did not come true. It was said that women would win in 1990, but eight women ran for the Senate and seven lost.*

There is, finally, some empirical evidence that women legislators do have perspectives different from men’s, which lead to different legislative results. According to *The Impact of Women in Public Office*, a study released by the Center for the American Woman and Politics, at Rutgers University, women are making a “profound and distinctive” difference in their legislatures, promoting popular feminist concerns: “Elected women are working to make the agendas of legislative institutions more responsive to women’s demands for equal rights as articulated by the contemporary women’s movement and more reflective of women’s concerns stemming from their roles as caregivers in the family and in society.” Based on telephone interviews with male and female state legislators, the CAWP study asserts that men and women tend to have different policy priorities. Women, it says, “were more likely to give top priority to women’s rights policies” and to “policies dealing with children and families and health care.”

The Gender Gap

IT SHOULD GO WITHOUT SAYING, BUT PROBABLY doesn’t, that regardless of how women would vote in the Senate, they have a right to be there. Women candidates should not have to earn access to the Senate as they once “earned” the right to vote, by promising to make the world a kinder, gentler place. Still, as a practical matter, candidates have to satisfy the expectations of their constituents. How does the electorate divide on women’s issues and the need for more women in office?

Candidates often say that polling data indicate that equally small numbers of voters would or would not vote for a woman on account of her sex. The majority of voters say that they consider the issues. It’s difficult to know, however, how these statements correspond to behavior. Many people probably wouldn’t say that they vote on the basis of sex, and many people are probably affected by unconscious biases. Celinda Lake and several candidates report that the strongest support for women candidates comes from educated, professional women under forty-five; the strongest opposition comes from older women who have fulfilled traditional domestic roles. There seems to be little if any hard data about the accuracy of these generalizations as applied to different racial and ethnic groups.

Everybody knows there’s a gender gap—differences in male and female voting patterns—but nobody knows how wide it is or how deep or reliable. As Eleanor Holmes Norton, the nonvoting delegate to the House from the Dis-



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Approximately six or seven hundred of them look at this magazine every now and then.

Approximately fifty or sixty check out the ads.

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A school that questions the value of a typical 20th century college education as much as you probably do, and a school that attempts to provide answers to your questions with questions of its own.

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trict of Columbia, says, "We've been hearing about it, seeing evidence of it, for at least twelve years, and yet have been blown away by anti-feminist men. At some point we ought to stop talking about the gender gap and try to understand it."

So what precisely do we know about the gender gap? According to Virginia Sapiro, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin, we know this: more women than men vote Democratic. We might also say, however, that more men than women vote Republican; and in fact, Sapiro says, the gender gap was caused by men leaving the Democratic Party while women stayed put. She adds, "When the discussion about the gender gap began, the question was 'What is it about women?'—reflecting an unspoken assumption that women are fickle. The question should have been 'What is it about men?'" Sapiro suspects that men became more conservative during the Reagan years partly in reaction to "the wimpiness of the Carter years," as typified by the hostage crisis. But, she cautions, this, too, is merely speculation.

So there is a partisan gender gap, for some reason or other, and since women register to vote in greater numbers than men, it can be said to favor the Democrats. But, as Linda DiVall says, the gap can be bridged: Republican men, for example, can sometimes win women's votes by attaching themselves to issues such as health care and Social Security.

We know that there is also a gender gap on issues, as DiVall's strategy implies. Women are less likely to favor cutoffs in social spending, Virginia Sapiro says, and they're less likely to favor war.

The gender gap on issues is changeable, however, as Sapiro stresses. She says, "The gap on social-welfare issues will lessen if men start losing faith in the economic policies of the last ten years." And the gender gap on issues is much more complicated than it first appears. For example, it is conventional wisdom that concern about the economy helps women candidates, but the truth of that hope, or fear, depends on how people analyze the economic crisis. Sapiro explains, "Everyone agrees the economy is a problem. Some will blame it on policies that favored the rich at the expense of the poor, and will talk about homelessness and the need to improve social services. Some will blame it on the deficit and the fact that we've been too wimpy with the Japanese. People aren't going to vote for women to stand up to the Japanese."

"Now, that's gender politics, that's a gender gap," Sapiro concludes. "But it's a lot more complicated, unpredictable, and interesting than the gender gap is usually supposed to be."

"There are a lot of pieces on this chessboard," Eleanor Holmes Norton remarks. The gender gap is also complicated by racial and class issues. It cuts across racial lines, Norton believes, but with varying degrees of incisiveness. Take women's reactions to the Thomas-Hill hearings: sex interacted with race and class to divide public opinion

every which way. Nonprofessional women seem to have found Anita Hill hard to believe, because they saw her as a woman with choices. Black women, Norton observes, were particularly troubled by the fact that Hill's allegations were made "at the last minute," because of a traditional concern within their community for procedural fairness, reflecting a history of unfair trials. "Blacks are very procedurally sensitive."

Still, many political women speculate hopefully that the Thomas-Hill hearings have activated diverse groups of women voters. Combined with fury over reversals of abortion rights, anger at the Thomas-Hill hearings may prove to have considerable political potency.

Or then again, it may not. When I spoke with her, Pat Schroeder was not sanguine. "I think women are feeling politically homeless more than empowered," she said. "You've got to win some now and again." Women in the House had just lost a battle on family leave, and Schroeder was contemplating powerlessness, including her own, and women's difficulties in confronting it. "Congresswomen aren't powerful. You get to the cloakroom and you're supposed to play ball. Women's issues aren't considered important. You're supposed to put them aside, not embarrass your colleagues, get with the program. 'Why don't you get on with something that matters?' they say. 'Why do you keep nagging us about family leave? And when you protest caps on sex discrimination in the Civil Rights Bill, they say, 'Aren't you petty?'"

Most women do not want to hear this from her, Schroeder says. "It sounds too painfully familiar. Most women feel in their core so much more vulnerable than men. They don't want to hear from a Pat Schroeder that congresswomen don't get powerful."

Schroeder is probably voicing what many political women feel, at least on occasion—as do some men, for individual congressmen probably don't have much power either. Balancing Schroeder's pessimism with the official optimism of the professional political women's community, you may glean some sense of how much and how little women progress. Despite the proliferation of focus groups and polls, assessing women's political prospects is hardly a science, and the best predictions are often confounded by irrational, uncontrollable events. You can characterize the American public as fundamentally decent and fair, or you can characterize it as fundamentally biased, ignorant, and cruel. Sometimes both characterizations seem equally true.

A lot of Americans are ready to elect more women to national and statewide office. And, as Pat Schroeder says, "A lot of Americans believe that Elvis is alive." Schroeder has been listening to talk radio, which is "vehemently anti-woman." She says, "I think they've decided to attack women with incredible vengeance because they're not afraid of us. They don't think we'll come and shoot them. Listen to hate radio for a week. Women who hope to break into the Senate had better be ready for trouble." □

According to a new national poll, an overwhelming majority of Americans believe our immigration policies are in disrepair and need to be reconsidered. In fact, the same Roper poll found that 55 percent of all Americans support a temporary moratorium on most immigration. We believe it's an idea worth considering.

Why America Needs A Temporary Moratorium on Immigration

A temporary moratorium or freeze on all immigration **except immediate family members of U.S. citizens** would provide a much-needed pause to an unprecedented wave of immigration. Annually, more than one million people immigrate legally to the U.S., while illegal entries are between 2 to 4 million. More importantly, a moratorium would:

- 1) Provide breathing room for a national debate on the future of immigration based on public, social and economic interests of the United States;**
 - 2) Help the nation focus on the purposes of immigration to the U.S. in the 1990s and beyond; and**
 - 3) Allow the nation to establish policies which will help prevent overpopulation and a deterioration of the American standard and quality of living.**
- By the year 2000, we will have sustained 30 years of unprecedented immigration — with no end in sight. This is unlike anything in our history. In earlier periods of American history, large waves of immigration have been followed by prolonged declines. First during the colonial era, later during the 1800s and most recently from the period 1925 to 1970, a sustained lull in immigration gave the earlier newcomers an opportunity to assimilate and the nation a chance to absorb and educate the children of those immigrants.

Immigration pressure — already unmanageable — will continue to grow. There are 160 people added to the world's population each minute, and nearly a billion a decade. Soon, the world's population will exceed 6 billion and continue to grow until it peaks at 12 to 15 billion. Air, land and sea transportation is cheap and widely available for [desperate] people enticed by the chance to move to America.
 - The immigration influx since 1970 has severely set back many of the nation's environmental goals that were dependent on stabilizing population. More than half of all population growth in the U.S. in the past decade has been immigrants and their descendants. In the 1990s, the percentage will be still higher.
 - At a time of structural and persistent unemployment, what has Congress done? Contrary to all common sense, in 1990 it claimed there was a labor shortage and increased immigration by 40 percent. Not surprisingly, unemployment in every major immigrant-receiving state in America is higher than the national average. For 25 years, Congress has responded to pressure from special interest groups — primarily cheap labor interests — not the 87 percent of Americans who oppose immigration increases.
 - America's departure and entry controls are chaotic and antiquated. Each day we read of thousands of aliens illegally crossing our border, of alien smuggling rings in New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, of thousands of people appearing at our airports without any documents at all. Our ability to regulate lawful departures from and entries into the U.S. has severely broken down.
 - Current immigration law creates a demand for ever-growing streams of people from more and more nations. It is immigrants and their recently-arrived relatives — not the American people as a whole — who determine who and how many come to the U.S. each year. Such programs as amnesties, "family preference," and "immigration lotteries" create expectations in millions more people that they will be able to come soon. This fuels pressure for more legal and illegal immigration.

It's time to consider a temporary moratorium on immigration.

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A father and son revisit South Africa and are encouraged to find the country irreversibly on the path to interracial government—but that path is bloody, and many of the overwhelming problems at its beginning will remain at its end

BETTER BUT NOT ALL BETTER



BY CONOR AND PATRICK CRUISE O'BRIEN

SIX YEARS AGO WE VISITED SOUTH AFRICA. IN THE article Conor wrote about our visit, "What Can Become of South Africa?" (March, 1986, *Atlantic*), he told of putting these three propositions to several South Africans:

The maintenance of the status quo is impossible.

Reforms acceptable both to the white electorate and to politicized blacks are impossible.

Revolution is impossible.

Last year we returned to South Africa, to see what had become of those propositions. The first has been amply demonstrated: the status quo of 1986, represented by President P. W. Botha, has been replaced by something remarkably different, under President F. W. de Klerk. The third proposition also holds: revolution looks even less likely in 1992 than it did in 1986. The African National Congress's vaunted "armed struggle" was never much more than rhetorical, and now it is in abeyance. Such armed struggles as are actually going on are mainly between different groups of blacks. Violence by right-wing white groups, mostly against blacks, is on the rise. White people live on the alert against attacks, but from criminals, not political activists.

It is the second proposition that has been partly invalidated and may yet be fully invalidated. In the March 17 referendum nearly 70 percent of the white population gave the De Klerk government a mandate to continue its negotiations with the ANC and other groups supported by the black majority. This was greeted with widespread rejoicing in both the white and black communities. Yet the negotiating projects of the National Party and of the ANC still differ quite widely. The problems that need to be explored now are: What are the limits of reforms acceptable to both the white electorate and politicized

blacks? Where is divergence likely to reach crisis proportions? And which side is more likely to give ground?

In Conor's 1986 article he wrote:

I don't believe that Botha and his colleagues are anywhere near to agreeing to hand over a significant share in power to any blacks. They may eventually agree, in order to ease the international pressure, not only to gestures like the release of Nelson Mandela but to quite far-reaching reforms: to end influx control, to reform the pass laws, even to abolish the Group Areas Act (although most groups would have to remain in the areas in which they were put during the imperious heyday of apartheid). These reforms would make life a bit easier for ordinary blacks, but it is not likely that they would do anything to reduce the unrest.

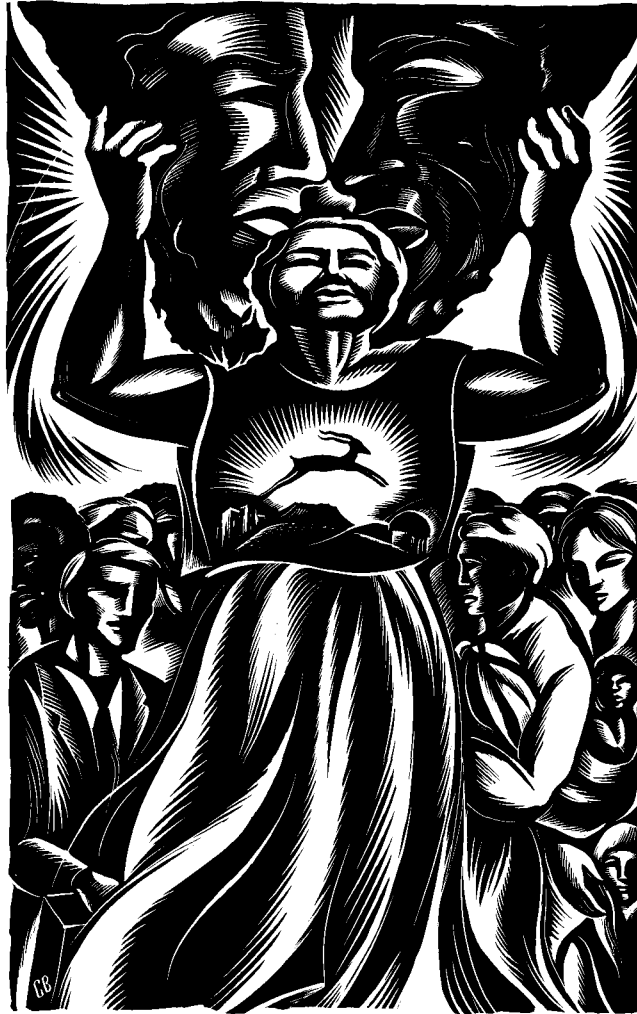
De Klerk and his colleagues have moved much faster than Botha's government would have. They have yet, however, to move beyond the *type* of reforms that Conor envisaged in the above passage: that is, no power within the state system has yet been handed over to any blacks. Yet there are clear signs that the current government is willing to hand over "a significant share in power" if it can find representative blacks willing to accept such a share. Representative blacks would have to include Nelson Mandela and the ANC executive committee. At present they are still bidding for unqualified majority rule as the eventual outcome of the negotiations. (A significant title, on a history of the ANC written by Francis Meli and published in Zimbabwe in 1988 and in the United States in 1989, is *South Africa Belongs to Us*.) But De Klerk has no more intention of ceding all power to the ANC than Botha had. As he has said, the National Party has no mandate or intention to "hand over completely power to the ANC or anybody else." Where the two leaders differ is

that Botha never intended to transfer *any* power, whereas De Klerk hopes to transfer *some* power, in order to preserve and stabilize what remains. He aims at an interracial coalition, within which the National Party will be the predominant partner. The ANC has not until very recently sounded anywhere near prepared to accept anything of the sort. Some persons close to De Klerk suggest, however, that appearances are deceptive, and that the ANC leadership is closer to agreement on the framework of a compromise than its rhetoric would suggest. If so, the ANC leaders must be prepared to face the loss of many of their most militant supporters in the townships. Yet if they refuse compromise, there will be no shift in state power at all. The National Party's confidence in De Klerk is essentially that he is not about to place white South Africa under ANC rule—as his right-wing opponents charge he is. We feel sure that this confidence is not misplaced. Some foreign comment interpreted the March 17 referendum as a mandate for black majority rule. It is not that; it is a mandate to negotiate.

Before Apartheid—and After

DE KLERK'S ADMIRERS ARE IN THE HABIT OF REFERRING to "post-apartheid South Africa" as something that is already there. And in a limited and literal sense it is. De Klerk, with great political courage, has jettisoned the whole apartheid code. Botha had tinkered with "petty apartheid." De Klerk has scrapped not only petty apartheid but also "grand apartheid," the creation of Hendrik Verwoerd in the 1950s.

Post-apartheid doesn't yet mean racially equal, though, or anything near it. In many ways post-apartheid South Africa is like pre-apartheid South Africa, which wasn't nonracist either. English-speaking South Africans often imply that South Africa was at least moving in the direction of racial equality before the National Party came in



and turned the clock back, in 1948. In reality, movement in the direction of racial equality had stopped and even been reversed years before. For most of the nineteenth century, under British rule, there had been no specifically racial laws in the Cape Colony. The property-based franchise was color-blind. It was because the British were believed to be heading in the direction of racial equality when they abolished slavery that the Voortrekkers left the Cape Colony in 1835 in order to found Transvaal and the Orange Free State, neither of which ever fancied racial equality. In the Cape by the 1880s a small number of blacks and coloureds had become rich enough to vote.

But then the laws were changed in such a way as to make the number even smaller. Cecil Rhodes, the diamond and gold millionaire, became Prime Minister of the Cape by making a

deal with the Afrikaners in 1887 that disenfranchised 28 percent of all previously eligible blacks by skewing property requirements against them. The necessary legislation was carried by the Cape Parliament, without objection from the Imperial Parliament. The franchise remained in this condition until 1936, when the government of J.B.M. Hertzog (a coalition of Afrikaners and English-speakers) took the vote away from all the blacks who had it. Coloureds lost it in the Cape in 1956, eight years after the National Party came to power. This was no radical change. It simply set the seal on long-established policy, on the part of *all* the white parties: to keep political power in white hands.

Post-apartheid South Africa is even worse than pre-apartheid in some ways. The damage done by apartheid is still there. The millions of people who were moved around by force in the heyday of apartheid are still where they were put. The repeal of the Group Areas Act, in June of last year, does not restore those who were displaced during the forty-one years in which the act remained in effect.

The scrapping of the apartheid code does, however, make a great difference. It has not brought about equali-

ty (or not yet) but it has swept away a fearsomely elaborate and ponderous system of regulation in which whites told nonwhites in pedantic and maddening detail where they could and could not live, how they could and could not move around, and how they were to behave in the places where they were allowed to live or move around. Blacks were constantly punished for infringement of the myriad regulations of the code. The lives of most nonwhites in South Africa are still miserable, for economic reasons, but at least the white rulers are no longer in the business of generating enormous amounts of additional and unnecessary misery for ideological reasons.

Militant radicals are telling the nonwhite population that apartheid is somehow really still there, but the population clearly doesn't believe them. Polls show that De Klerk is popular with blacks and even more popular with coloureds and Indians. That South Africa should have a President who is (as yet, at least) popular with these groups without having forfeited the confidence of the white electorate is in itself something of a prodigy—something we would have assumed to be impossible on our visit six years ago.

Now that whites have at last desisted from pushing blacks around for the sweet sake of an ideology that laid down that they must be pushed around, tensions between black and white have eased a bit. Conor remembers one visit in the 1980s when his host, David Welsh, met him at the airport and handed him a cushion as he got into the car. The cushion was for the protection of his face should the windscreen be broken. Black youths were at the time in the habit of stoning the cars of whites along the road from the airport to Cape Town. This time when Welsh rang us to confirm that he would meet us at the airport, he added, "No need for a cushion this time, Conor."

The cushion index should not be taken as betokening any general decline in violence. There has actually been a serious rise in violence, most of it in the townships and almost all—though not entirely—black on black.

All the main institutions of apartheid were still in place during our 1986 visit. Patrick's personal reactions to a first experience of post-apartheid South Africa are particularly relevant, because he belongs to one of the categories targeted by the apartheid code. Under the Population Registration Act of 1950 (repealed in June of last year, along with the Group Areas Act), had he been a South African resident, he would have been classified as "coloured."

Patrick writes: From the moment we arrived in South Africa, we were both struck by the very great difference in the atmosphere of the country. The nervous tension that in 1986 was all-pervading has to a great extent fallen away. In 1986, when Botha's police were smashing the "comrades" in the townships, there was a feeling that South Africa was on the brink of a terrible explosion—that black South Africa, inevitably in the ascendant and supported by the West, had decided to free itself from

apartheid. Even the most liberal white South Africans were predicting the worst. The talk at the time was of English-speaking South Africans leaving as fast as they could and of Afrikanerdom preparing to dig itself in for its final battle.

By the time of our latest visit the feeling of imminent disaster was almost entirely gone. All politically aware South Africans know that their country's future is bound to be turbulent. Most are confident, however, that De Klerk is at least moving in the right direction. He has made it quite clear that he genuinely wants to negotiate a new South Africa, and he is now slowly winning support across the racial divide. One of the most surprising reactions to the news that the government had long funded black opposition to the ANC was great disappointment in De Klerk. The fear was that the De Klerk bubble had finally burst and that he was just like "all the rest of them." In fact he is not remotely like all the rest of them. Such a reaction to a political scandal indicates the very great faith that many South Africans have placed in him. The catchphrases of De Klerk's South Africa are "peaceful transition" to a "nonracial" government. Both are very broad and deliberately vague. That they are even being used, however, is itself great progress. In 1986 "ANC terrorist" and "communist conspiracy" were more common utterances from the mouths of government ministers.

In 1986 I wrote (in *The New Republic*) about my experience of shopping in Newlands, a fashionable middle-class suburb of Cape Town. Six years ago I found shop owners and assistants instantly hostile, changing their tune only when they realized that I was a foreigner. This time, not only in Newlands but throughout those parts of South Africa we visited (Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban), I found no trace of the earlier hostility. Shop owners were no longer immediately nervous when a black face entered their shop. Retailers, along with the rest of South Africa, were getting used to the idea of a black middle class. Shopping malls, restaurants, and hotels now contain a far greater ethnic mix. Not only in Cape Town but also in Johannesburg's Carlton Hotel and Durban's Holiday Inns the ratio of white to nonwhite guests is approximately 70:30, with no apparent difficulties in social interaction.

The horrors of apartheid South Africa are not yet all gone. To see this one need only drive out from Cape Town to Crossroads, where De Klerk and his reforms have made no difference to the squalor in which hundreds of thousands of black squatters live in mile after mile of shantytowns that run along the motorway. For their inhabitants the new South Africa will bring no change, at least in the short term. As we drove past Crossroads, the feelings of despair and depression with which we left South Africa in 1986 were rekindled. South Africa's underclass is still very much in existence and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

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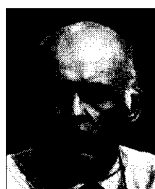
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A Strong President for Strong Opposition

BOTH: IN THE FIRST WEEK OF LAST SEPTEMBER, De Klerk unveiled the National Party's proposed framework for a new constitution. If these proposals were agreed to by other parties, including the ANC, South Africa would have two houses of Parliament: a lower house, elected by universal (non-racial) suffrage, with proportional representation; and an upper house, elected on a regional basis, designed to secure representation for minorities. The upper house would have a veto over legislation enacted by the lower one. There would be a cabinet in which all major parties were represented; a collective presidency with three to five members; separation of powers between legislative, executive, and judicial branches and between central, regional, and local government; and a justiciable bill of rights. The existing homelands—the last remaining legal structure of the apartheid system—would be abolished, and South Africa would be divided into nine provinces.

The National Party's proposals were immediately denounced by the ANC. Nelson Mandela said that the proposals were a recipe for governmental paralysis and continued conflict, "a system that will entrench minority privileges by ensuring that any majority party is powerless to make significant social changes, powerless to remove minority privileges, and in many ways, powerless to rule."

The denunciations were expected and did not shake De Klerk. Clearly he envisages a prolonged wrangle over the shape of the new constitution, because he has predicted that the next two years will determine the country's future for the next fifty.

South Africa will probably get a new constitution sometime during this decade, and probably early in it, and that constitution will probably quite closely resemble De Klerk's proposals. If De Klerk attempted to give in to the ANC by conceding unqualified majority rule, he would lose the majority by virtue of which he is President and through which he is enabled to produce and carry out any constitutional proposals at all: that is, the majority that the National Party has in the present white-dominated parliament and all-white electorate. In the last resort the South African Defence Force would intervene, with the support of most of the white community, to insist that De Klerk seek a renewed mandate from the people who gave him his mandate in the first place: the all-white electorate. He would not get it. But De Klerk does not want to do anything so drastic. His September proposals are sufficiently far-reaching in the eyes of the white community—the Conservatives as well as the ANC denounced them—and he is not going to reach much further.

Can he be forced to concede the substance of the ANC's demands? Probably not. ANC militants often threaten to "make South Africa ungovernable" if their

full demands are not met. The trouble is, those areas that the ANC might be able to make ungovernable—the black townships—already *are* ungovernable. Many of them are theaters of interblack factional violence, most of it between ANC supporters and supporters of the Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party, and all chronically suffer from large-scale criminal violence. An ANC summons to mass insurrection might make things even more violent in those areas, but the white community would not be sufficiently affected to force it to concede the ANC's demands. A sustained, all-out miners' strike would indeed shake white South Africa, but such a strike seems unlikely. The miners did not undertake one when the apartheid code was still in force, although Winnie Mandela called on them to do so. Why should they impose on themselves the miseries of a sustained general strike just because the ANC chose to reject a far-reaching program of reform which has already swept away all the legal institutions of apartheid (with the exception, for the moment, only of the homelands)? Cosatu, the ably led black trade-union movement, will declare solidarity with the ANC but will continue to look after the interests of its own members, a relatively privileged body among black South Africans. The most the ANC can count on is some token strikes of limited duration. That will not be enough to induce the National Party to give substantial ground.

Big strikes can be organized, but they are extremely hazardous, and two-edged. One two-day strike, organized jointly by the ANC and Cosatu in the first week of last November, is said to have brought out 3.5 million workers and to have been the biggest strike in South African history. Yet it ended in disaster, at the President Steyn gold mine, with heavy fighting among members of the work force along an ethnic line of division. Most of the ANC leaders are Xhosa ("Xhosa Nostra" is a hostile nickname for the party), and the workers who followed their lead were also Xhosa. Basotho mine workers wanted to go on working, and were attacked by the Xhosa strikers. After sixty-nine miners had been killed and a hundred and eighty injured, management closed the mine, leaving twenty-five hundred miners temporarily unemployed. The greatest strike in South African history had done a little damage to the mine owners, but its principal victims were the miners themselves. Failure on such a scale discredited the idea, fostered by the ANC, that the strike weapon will bring the ANC to power in South Africa. The episode also provided further demonstration that the ethnic factor, dismissed by the ANC as a fiction of apartheid, is of growing significance in post-apartheid South Africa. (Compare the rise of nationalism after the collapse of communism.)

The same hazards apply to the other political weapons at the ANC's disposal. The main one is the boycott. Boycotting white businesses can do some marginal damage, especially in certain areas, such as Port Elizabeth and East

London. The most “successful” form of boycott—that of the schools—has succeeded in doing much more damage to blacks than to whites. The children who in 1985 went on a prolonged school boycott at the ANC’s behest are now known as “the lost generation,” and are a cause of acute concern to the black community and to the ANC itself. The propensity toward education boycotts continues, and threatens to create further lost generations. In September the University of Cape Town was paralyzed by a boycott accompanied by arson and other forms of violence. The unwillingness of the university authorities to discipline violent students victimizes the students who want to learn, and compounds the damage.

Some ANC members—and all the groups to the left of the party—seem to believe that by rejecting the proposals of the National Party and agitating against it they can regenerate international pressure on Pretoria and revive sanctions. This seems quite unlikely. The National Party’s September proposals are far-reaching enough, and democratic enough, to appeal to most Western governments. The variations they introduce to the one person—one vote system have precedents in other democracies: Switzerland, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States. If the ANC rejects them in order to negotiate an improved version, its position will at least be understood internationally. But if it responds by attempting to “make South Africa ungovernable,” it will attract little or no international sympathy. The ANC’s initial denunciations of the De Klerk proposals are actually helpful to De Klerk, because they refute the more dangerous charges of his Conservative rivals: that he has given in to the ANC’s demands.

DE KLERK IS A FORMIDABLE AND RESOURCEFUL political leader. As it happened, we were in South Africa at a time when he was obliged to exert his political skills to their fullest. This was last summer, when the political scandal known as Inkathagate dominated the



ALL POLITICALLY AWARE SOUTH AFRICANS KNOW THAT THEIR COUNTRY’S FUTURE IS BOUND TO BE TURBULENT. BUT DE KLERK HAS MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT HE WANTS TO NEGOTIATE A NEW SOUTH AFRICA, AND HE IS NOW WINNING SUPPORT ACROSS THE RACIAL DIVIDE.

political leadership that De Klerk and Mandela were then in a position to supply. Mandela was abroad—as he so often is—when Inkathagate broke, and he did not return immediately from Cuba to reinforce his party’s demands. De Klerk stayed in or near Pretoria but declined to make any immediate statement. The fate of Vlok and Malan was left in doubt for some days. Instead of speaking himself, De Klerk first put forward his Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, for a major television appearance. Botha took a hard line, in a statement designed to meet the concerns of the white community. The gist of it was, Why shouldn’t the South African government fund Inkatha, when the ANC was being funded by foreign governments, including communist governments? The speech went over quite well with Afrikaners, not so well with English-speakers and their press, and, of course, badly with blacks.

A few days later came De Klerk’s televised statement, followed by an interview. De Klerk sounded much more conciliatory than Botha, and also gave some ground, but not much. He conceded that the transactions were improper. They had been stopped and would not recur.

South African media. The ANC had long been charging that South African policemen were conniving with the Zulu warriors of the Inkatha movement in their attacks on ANC supporters. De Klerk’s standard reply to the ANC’s charges had been that he was prepared to consider any evidence that the ANC might provide in support of them. For some time nothing persuasive was forthcoming. Then the Johannesburg *Weekly Mail* began to publish documents showing that Inkatha had received secret subventions from the South African government. The documents didn’t prove all the ANC’s charges about collusion, but they did make those charges look a lot more plausible.

The ANC demanded the dismissal of the two ministers most closely involved: Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok and Defence Minister Magnus Malan. What followed was instructive concerning the kind of

There would be a commission of inquiry into all covert funding projects. In the meantime, the two ministers responsible would be not dismissed but demoted.

With that interview Inkathagate was effectively over. De Klerk's tactics in this small but tricky crisis were similar to his grand strategy for a post-apartheid South Africa. That is, he gave ground but decided himself exactly where to draw the line. He got help from Mandela, which may or may not have been intentional. Nelson Mandela's presence in Cuba seemed to have more impact on some Americans than the contemporaneous goings-on over Inkathagate. Soon after his trip the Bush Administration granted the ANC \$4.5 million and Inkatha \$2.5 million—more for Inkatha than originally planned (and much more than the De Klerk government's secret payments to Inkatha), in part because of conservative calls in Congress not to assist groups "associated with the Communist Party."

After the return of the Mandelas to South Africa, Nelson Mandela continued on what appeared to be a losing streak and De Klerk on a winning one. Some members of one of the white fascist groups, way out to the right of the Conservative Party, were in jail awaiting trial on charges of indiscriminate murders of black people. Bail had been refused, and the men had gone on a hunger strike in order to get immunity from prosecution. The government had refused to yield to the demands of the strikers, whose strike was at an advanced stage. Mandela appealed to De Klerk to grant their demands. This may have been the response of a compassionate, Christlike man. If so, Nelson Mandela is too good to be in politics at all. More likely Mandela, whose authority over the ANC was then less secure than it now appears to be, was responding to pressure from within his own party, in which some people want to make trouble for De Klerk at whatever cost. But six months later Mandela was in a strong enough position to declare publicly that De Klerk's government was essential to the negotiating process, and that it was his duty to help keep De Klerk in power.

If the momentum of reform is to be maintained—and even if the reforms so far achieved are to be safeguarded—De Klerk needs to stand up to the white right, and to be seen doing it. In the matter of the hunger strikers De Klerk did just that. He declined the advice of both Mandela and the white right and let the strikers know that if they continued, they would be allowed to die. The strikers caved in. South Africans of all complexions now know that they have a strong President. To be prepared to let white right-wing hunger strikers die rather than give in to their moral blackmail takes not only political courage but physical courage of a high order in today's South Africa.

Around the same time, De Klerk went to Ventersdorp, in the Transvaal, to address a meeting. This was in itself a show of strength: supporters of the National Party were then believed to be in a minority in the rural Transvaal,

the territory traditionally most favorable to the Conservative Party and the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB in the Afrikaans acronym) and other fascist or near-fascist groups to the right of the Conservatives. In the Transvaal as a whole and also in the Orange Free State, De Klerk's referendum proposal of March 17 won a surprise majority. The right had promised to make it impossible for De Klerk to speak at Ventersdorp, and a large mob attacked his meeting. De Klerk's police broke up the attack, killing three of the attackers. De Klerk had not only given further proof of moral and physical courage; he had also demonstrated that his police would break up a violent white right-wing mob—something that needed demonstration. Since then De Klerk's authority over the security forces has been consolidated by the outcome of the referendum. He emerged as a leader with the confidence of a large majority of the white community.

Black Against Black in Zululand

MID-NATAL HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF THE most extensive and spectacular fighting between supporters of the ANC and supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Local people reckon that over the past five years political violence in this region alone has cost at least three thousand lives—more than have been lost in the past twenty years in political violence in Northern Ireland.

Pietermaritzburg is the capital of Natal, and its principal newspaper is *The Natal Witness*. The paper has lived up to its noble name, receiving in consequence abuse and threats from ANC and Inkatha supporters and also from white extremists. David Willers, the editor of the *Witness*, kindly agreed shortly after Inkathagate to show us around the scenes of recent fighting, along with some colleagues, including a young Zulu woman.

Natal incorporates Zululand, made up of the province's Zulu-populated territories that are not autonomous. In addition, carved out of Natal is the autonomous (but not formally independent) homeland of KwaZulu, the fief of Chief Mangosothu Buthelezi and his Inkatha Freedom Party. The fighting in Natal and KwaZulu, unlike that in the townships and the gold mines elsewhere, is not intertribal but between Zulus, with some contributions from white extremist groups and possibly from some members of the South African Defence Force. (Both the ANC and Inkatha have alleged white participation in attacks on their people.) Generally speaking, the urban areas are run by Zulu supporters of the ANC and the rural areas are run by Zulu chiefs who support Inkatha. It seems improbable that the inter-Zulu fighting represents a deep cleavage between rural and urban sections of the Zulu population. It is more a case of conflict between two political factions whose bosses use different forms of rhetoric—the ANC's "modern" and Inkatha's "traditional." (Compare media reports of ethnic-faction and clan-faction fighting in

Lebanon, in terms of right wing and left wing.) Both forms of rhetoric sound mechanical and perfunctory. This is a contest for political ascendancy in post-apartheid Natal, between two groups of political bosses with different power bases and an equally ruthless way with dissidents.

Willers drove us through the areas devastated by the Zulu *impis* and, to a lesser extent, by the warriors' ANC opponents. The South African winter is warm, dry, and sunny in this region, which consists of broad valleys between low hills studded with groves of blue gum trees, imported long ago from Australia and flourishing here. It is an attractive country, and the people are handsome and dignified. Part of the area is urbanized, in what are called townships. Parts of the townships are slums filled with shacks of the universal Third World type. Larger areas are covered with what by general African standards is excellent housing, now overcrowded and inhabited by an increasingly high proportion of unemployed people.

The violence at the time of our visit lay mostly under the surface, but its results and implications dominated the entire scene. The ANC took over the political leadership of the townships in the mid-eighties and violently challenged the traditional leaders of Zululand and Kwa-Zulu—Buthelezi and Inkatha. The challenge was met by greater violence from the traditionalists, with deniable support from the South African police and army.

The most concentrated conflict occurred in March of 1990, and one village near the epicenter was Vulisaka, once an ANC stronghold on the edge of Inkatha country. Nothing is left of Vulisaka but burnt-out shells and rubble. On the wall of a wrecked butcher shop hangs a calendar, still open at the fatal month.

The Zulu *impis*—numbering in this case more than three thousand men, armed with both traditional and modern weapons—had swept across the valley in the last days of March, destroying everything in their path. From the village, looking down into the valley, you can see a great swath of burned-out houses. The desolation, to



THE FIGHTING IN NATAL AND KWAZULU, UNLIKE THAT IN THE TOWNSHIPS AND THE GOLD MINES ELSEWHERE, IS NOT INTERTRIBAL BUT BETWEEN ZULUS, WITH SOME CONTRIBUTIONS FROM WHITE EXTREMIST GROUPS AND POSSIBLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE.

which the inhabitants have never dared to return, remains as a symbol of Inkatha power—the power of the Zulu chiefs and warlords—in mid-Natal today.

The sources of Inkatha power are the inherent strength and bellicosity of traditional Zulu society and the backing of the South African police and army, denials of which now lack all credibility. For example, the attack of the *impis* was immediately preceded by an Inkatha anti-ANC rally at King Park Stadium, in Durban, on March 25. That rally is now known to have been funded by the South African police (and this on De Klerk's watch, if not with his knowledge). When the *impis* struck, fired up by the rally, the South African Defence Force stood by during the offensive—as journalists then present attest—and intervened when ANC forces started fighting back.

There are some sixty thousand refugees from mid-Natal. We learned that they are afraid to go back, because if they did they would have to submit to Inkatha and thus could become targets for the ANC. Ordinary, nonpolitical people are caught in the middle.

We visited one refugee camp, run and guarded by the ANC and harboring about three to four hundred people, mainly women, children, and old men.

Patrick: The camp was run by a local ANC officer and was intended to house and feed ANC members and sympathizers displaced by interblack fighting. Women and children were housed in one warehouselike building. They had no privacy whatsoever and slept and ate on the hard concrete floor. The men and older boys were housed in a similar, separate building, with pools of urine on the floor. It was littered with fragments of food, broken glass, and the remnants of fires lit to keep the men warm. The ANC official shrugged his shoulders and asked what could he do.

Bad as the refugee camp was, those who had got to it and been allowed in were the fortunate ones. Those outside—displaced, impoverished, their only means of survival crime—are the ones for whom there is little or no

hope. These people, even in post-apartheid South Africa, will remain an underclass shunned by all political sides. In the twenty-first century the dividing line in South Africa, as in most of the rest of the world, will be social and economic, not racial: between the haves and the have-nots.

Conor: I saw the same things in that camp that Patrick saw, but couldn't quite feel as shocked by them. I had seen far worse camps in other parts of Africa and in Asia. But this was miserable enough.

Both: There is no doubt about the complicity between the South African security forces and the Inkatha *impis* against the local ANC and the inhabitants of its territory. This complicity was established and encouraged by Pretoria before De Klerk came to power, and was confirmed by government funding of Inkatha. The funding has stopped, but the complicity goes on. Understandably, the ANC accuses De Klerk of bad faith. But it is not clear that De Klerk can do much about the situation. Until very recently the ANC regarded itself as being at war with the South African state, and ANC militants in the townships had been in the habit of burning policemen and their families alive: the "necklace" treatment. Against that background it is not altogether surprising that members of the South African security forces should have been reluctant to risk their lives to defend ANC strongholds against the *impis* of Inkatha. But there could be a great change in the attitudes of all concerned if both the ANC and Inkatha become partners with the National Party. If such a coalition comes into being—and that now seems likely—there will still be deep and lethal divisions in South African society, but the lines of division will no longer be in the same places.

Happier, But Not Happily Ever After

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS of the past year has been the abandonment by the ANC of the "cultural boycott," which was intended to isolate South African society both artistically and intellectually and had been enforced, sometimes violently, by ANC militants. Conor and his students were victims of one branch of this policy, the "academic boycott," when in 1986 his classes at the University of Cape Town were broken up by mobs of students and militants posing as students, waving ANC banners. (One banner read VIVA ANC! on one side and VIVA IRA! on the other.)

In July of last year the ANC began to phase out its support of the cultural boycott. The United Nations ended its own cultural boycott in December, presumably at the request of the ANC (at whose request it had been initiated). Last January, Nelson Mandela gave the cultural boycott a spectacular funeral by hosting a reception for the singer Paul Simon at the beginning of his South African tour. This was not merely a lifting of the cultural boy-

cott but an implicit repudiation of the whole idea, because in 1985 Paul Simon had broken the cultural boycott when it was still official ANC policy and had been accused of "musical imperialism" by the ANC's cultural apparatchiks.

Since his release from prison, until quite recently, Mandela has often looked and sounded like a prisoner of his party's totalitarian tendency, with its itch to enforce diktats and excommunicate dissidents. Mandela is by personal inclination a liberal, and the Paul Simon affair was his first major victory over the totalitarian tendency within a party of which he has sometimes appeared no more than a nominal leader. The expression of delight on Mandela's face, recorded in the photographs that show him welcoming Paul Simon, may be seen as reflecting satisfaction with an enhancement of his own leadership and a sign of movement in the direction of the kind of South Africa he wants.

The affair also revealed alignments and confrontations that are likely to be significant for the future. Simon's tour had the support of De Klerk's ruling National Party, Buthelezi's Inkatha, and Mandela's ANC—the parties and the leaders around whom an interracial coalition will have to be built. It was attacked by two radical black organizations, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organization (Azapo). Azapo's youth wing threatened to disrupt the tour, and a leftist military group, the Azanian National Liberation Army, threw hand grenades at the Johannesburg offices of the tour's local promoter. Mostly because of the high price of tickets and the lack of transportation, black attendance at the concerts was low. But attendance at protest demonstrations organized by the two radical groups at the same time was much lower, a phenomenon Mandela must have noted with satisfaction.

The spontaneous inclinations of the ANC's left wing are certainly closer to those of Azapo and the hand-grenade throwers than to Mandela's. Presumably the godfathers of the ANC's left are telling their followers to avoid confrontation with the leadership over relatively minor matters and to reserve their strength for the big political crunch.

The crunch must come, perhaps by the end of the year, over whether or not the ANC will accept a role in an interracial coalition, thus tacitly abandoning its previous position of "winner takes all, and South Africa is ours." Formally, the ANC leadership still demands a popularly elected constitutional convention, which would be expected to provide the party with a monopoly of power in South Africa unless the South African Defence Force intervened. But the participation of the ANC in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) and its role at the opening of that convention, last December, strongly suggest that the party leadership is now headed not toward monopoly but toward coalition. Indeed, CODESA itself is a kind of coalition. All of South Africa's

political parties were invited to take part in it and all did, except for the white parties to the right of the National Party (Conservatives and neo-Nazis) and the black parties to the left of the ANC (the Pan-Africanist Congress and Azapo). The ANC is at present a coalition of left and right, and its left is much more in sympathy with the black parties that boycotted CODESA than with CODESA itself or with Mandela.

If the leadership holds to its present course, a split in the ANC appears inevitable. It is likely to come at or shortly before the moment when Mandela and De Klerk reach agreement on arrangements embodying the principle of interracial coalition. From that moment on the new coalition will face a series of sustained and bloody challenges from extremists both black and white. In the black community the ANC dissidents, together with the PAC and Azapo, will, wherever they are strong enough, attack and murder the "traitors" who follow Mandela's line. In the white community the AWB and other neo-Nazi groups will deal in the same way with the "traitors" who follow De Klerk. Both Mandela and De Klerk will themselves be high on the hit lists of the extremists.

Yet the fact that the attacks will be coming from both extremes must have a tendency to strengthen the coalition, both internally and in the relations of each party with its constituents. When whites yell that De Klerk has betrayed them, that claim will be drowned out and discredited by blacks shouting that Mandela has betrayed them, and vice versa. The same sort of consideration affects the most crucial of all South African questions today: the loyalty of the security forces during the transition to interracial government. It would be very dangerous if the new arrangements were greeted with universal jubilation among blacks while being violently attacked by a substantial segment of whites. Yet a violent challenge to the new arrangements from a substantial segment of blacks must enhance, in the eyes of the security forces, the credibility of De Klerk's claim not to have sold out



MOST SOUTH AFRICANS WILL BE ABLE TO SEE THAT SHOULD THE COALITION SUCCEED TO THE ATTACKS OF THE EXTREMISTS, SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE HEADED TOWARD AN ANARCHY THAT COULD BE AVERTED ONLY BY MILITARY COUP. FEW WILL WISH TO GO DOWN THAT ROAD.

the essentials of white interests. The violence of white resistance is correspondingly beneficial to the leadership of Mandela.

Assuming—as on the whole we now do—that the security forces will accept the transition and the authority of an interracial coalition, the new arrangements should have other, benign spin-offs. When the security forces are under attack from white extremists as well as black ones, the racist attitudes hitherto prevalent in those forces are liable to undergo some degree of revision. With Nelson Mandela in the government, the security forces, in combating new forms of black political violence, will have allies as well as enemies in the black community.

Although some kinds of political violence will for a time increase under an interracial coalition, others will probably decrease. One kind likely to decrease is that which has done the

most damage in recent years: the clashes between Inkatha and ANC supporters in many townships, as well as in mid-Natal. Mandela and Buthelezi, as partners in a coalition government, would do their best to bring these conflicts to an end. The personal relations between the two have always been cordial—they corresponded while Mandela was in prison—although the men have been kept apart since Mandela's release by the feuding of their followers. The elements in the ANC most hostile to Inkatha would be hostile to a coalition that included both leaders. These elements would be in rebellion against the coalition government, and could legitimately be repressed by the security forces, which would discharge that task with a will—and with the full backing of all members of the government, including the ANC leaders.

Barring some major, unforeseen stroke of bad luck, the interracial coalition should be able to fend off both the black and the white challenge to its authority. Most South Africans, black and white, will be able to see that should the coalition government succumb to the attacks of the two mutually hostile sets of extremists, South

Africa would be headed toward an anarchy that could be averted only by military coup. Few South Africans will wish to go down that road. Many who were previously doubtful seem likely to rally to the support of the interracial coalition. Its militant enemies will become its most effective sponsors.

CONOR: SIX YEARS AGO I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT South Africa could effect the transition to an interracial government without going through a military coup followed by an international blockade. I had foreseen the release of Nelson Mandela and the repeal of apartheid laws. What I did not conceive to be possible was that a leader of the National Party and President of white South Africa would be prepared to share power with the ANC. By offering to do that, De Klerk changed the whole political scene. The ANC's response, which was at first grudging, because of the influence of the "winner take all" tendency, now looks increasingly favorable. The ANC now accepts the principle of interracial coalition as an "interim" measure, though it must know that the interim is likely to be a long one. In the aftermath of the March referendum, the main ANC complaint, in fact, was that De Klerk was not moving fast enough in the direction of coalition. I now believe, therefore, that the transition from all-white to interracial government is under way. It is not a peaceful transition but quite a bloody one, even at this stage. The victory of the interracial coalition over its black and white enemies, however, appears assured.

Both: This is not a case of "and they all lived happily ever after"—not by any means. Even after apartheid is dead and buried, and interracial government securely established, South Africa will still be in the grip of the huge social and demographic problems that already beset it but are obscured from view by the death throes of apartheid. These problems consist mainly of a population explosion among blacks and, in association, high and rising rates of both chronic unemployment and crime. The year 1991 in South Africa saw about 20,000 murders, 40,000 armed robberies, and 260,000 home break-ins. Only about seven percent of these had any connection with politics, so the transition to interracial government will not in itself lead to any significant abatement in these forms of violence. Successive white governments did nothing much about any of this except to fight crime, and even there they met with little success. A coalition government will necessarily have a more positive approach to the problems of the black community, but it is not likely, even with interna-

tional aid, to have the means proportionate to the problems.

In addition, South Africa—once again, mainly its black population—is headed toward an AIDS epidemic. Its governments so far have done singularly little to avert or mitigate the problem. "If there is no cure, vaccine, or behavior change," says the Cape Town social scientist Virginia van der Vliet, "up to 27 percent of the adult South African population will be HIV-positive by the year 2010. At the moment, the chances of behavior change, at least, seem remote." Van der Vliet also notes warnings from experts that South Africa's AIDS-education programs are "not only way behind those of the West but also lagging behind the rest of Africa."

Would an interracial government show more responsibility in relation to the family and health needs of the black population than white governments have shown? It should, of course, but the record of the ANC might sow some doubts as to whether it would. An article in the ANC journal *Sechaba*, quoted by Van der Vliet, suggested that the AIDS virus might have been developed "in the secrecy of the laboratories of many imperialist countries." ANC activists in the townships have had similar but more destructive reactions to family planning. At the height of the "unrest" in the townships in the late 1980s, family-planning clinics were among the principal targets of the ANC comrades. The clinics were apparently seen as part of a genocidal conspiracy of the imperialists against the black population.

Fortunately, there is no reason to believe that the mentality that shaped these reactions will have any influence whatever over the coming interracial coalition government of South Africa. One of the many benign effects of the coalition is that the ANC, by the mere fact of agreeing to it, will automatically shear off its own lunatic fringe, which is still luxuriantly abundant. The clinic burners and their friends will, of course, be among the first to shout "Revolution betrayed!" and denounce Mandela as the arch-traitor. They are unlikely to prevail against him and the rest of the present leadership, who are likely to prove responsible and stable coalition partners.

Daunting as are the problems that will face it, the emergence of an interracial government is something to be welcomed and supported without reservation. The transition from institutions based on racist assumptions to interracial institutions will rank as one of the most positive developments of the momentous last decade of the twentieth century. □



FIRST ENCOUNTERS

EUGENE DEBS AND JOHN REED

THE SUMMER OF 1918 was hot in more ways than one. In Chicago, John Reed, reporter, and Art Young, cartoonist, were covering the trial of I.W.W. members—"Wobblies"—for interfering with military enlistment. Their own retrial for publishing anti-war commentary in *The Masses* was pending. Now thirty, Reed had reported the war from both sides and felt the senseless slaughter of it. "It is not our war," he had written, but by 1917 it was. In the fall he went to Russia, in time to cover the revolution. People seizing power from a corrupt aristocracy—that was a struggle he understood.

During a Fourth of July recess Young took Reed down to Terre Haute, Indiana, to see his old friend Eugene Debs. A veteran union organizer, four times the Socialist Party candidate for President, Debs was out on bail on—what else?—a sedition charge. He had been crisscrossing the Midwest, speaking against the war, almost daring the authorities to arrest him as they had hundreds of others. After Canton, Ohio, they did.

Reed was depressed by the patriotic hysteria, and it felt good to meet this man who held true to his convictions. Debs was six foot two and given to wrapping a long arm around a friend's shoulders in comradeship. He welcomed his guests warmly. Sounds of a Fourth of July parade drifted through the parlor windows. Looking out, Reed later wrote, you could see men passing: "That's where Gene Debs lives," you could see them saying, as one would say "The House of the Traitor." Debs, amused, suggested that they sit on the front porch and "give 'em a good show." So they sat there in their shirt sleeves, talking companionably, probably about the war, about Russia, ignoring the furtive looks. Reed took mental notes and Young sketched Debs's profile against a box of petunias. As they left, Debs clasped Reed's hand and slapped his shoulder in affection.

The *Masses* indictments were dropped, but when *Ten Days That Shook the World* was published, Debs read it in his prison cell.

—Nancy Caldwell Sorel



Suavely Lyrical

Nat King Cole's ingratiating singing obscured his cool piano technique

by Michael Ullman

NAT KING COLE, who was in the late 1940s and the 1950s one of America's best-loved entertainers, hardly thought of himself as a singer. In 1954, talking to the *Down Beat* writer John Tynan after having made a string of hits, including "Straighten Up and Fly Right," "Route 66," "Mona Lisa," "Too Young," and "Unforgettable," he said that he had started singing to relieve the "monotony" of playing piano with his trio, and he wondered that the public was so undemanding: "If you think about it, 90 percent of the popular stars today, in-

cluding myself, have no voice, but they have soul, that appeal that will touch the average guy."

Cole needn't have been so diffident about his singing. His butter-smooth voice, hiply confiding tone, perfect pitch, and clear enunciation still set a standard for pop singing. In his unpretentious way he seemed able to sell any song. There was a glow in his voice; he always sounded cheerful, and many of his best performances came in songs of praise: "Too Marvelous for Words," "You Stepped Out of a Dream," "The Very Thought of You." He had a jazz

musician's timing wedded to his own brand of insouciance. Cole dawdled behind the beat like a three-year-old on a walk: he always got where he wanted to go, and seemed to have fun on the way.

Now the subject of three books—by his second wife, Maria Cole, by James Haskins with Kathleen Benson, and by Leslie Gourse, whose *Unforgettable*, the most recent of them, was published last year—Cole remains a force in American music. Segments of his short-lived television show, first broadcast in 1956, have been rerun on public television; his daughter, Natalie Cole, has won a Grammy for an album of songs that her father made famous; and Mosaic Records has recently issued *The Complete Capitol Recordings of The Nat King Cole Trio*, a set of eighteen compact discs, or twenty-seven LPs. (It is available only through the mail, at \$282 including shipping, from Mosaic Records, 35 Melrose Place, Stamford, Connecticut 06902.) The collection contains more than sixty previously unissued tracks, a group of rare radio transcriptions—78s made for broadcast only—and a hundred or so tracks that have never been on LP. It contains the definitive version of many of Cole's hits, including "Nature Boy" and "Mona Lisa"; his most celebrated jazz performances, "Body and Soul" and "Blues in My Shower"; and the 1956 small-band date previously issued as *After Midnight*. The 1940 and 1941 Decca recordings are on a CD issued separately by Decca/MCA, *Hit That Jive, Jack*. And the trio's first recordings (made in 1938–1941) have been collected by VJC on four discs, *The Complete Early Transcriptions*.

BORN IN Montgomery, Alabama, probably in 1917 (sources vary by two or three years), Cole was reared in Chicago, and grew up close to the Grand Terrace, a South Side nightclub where the pianist Earl Hines performed with a big band for a decade starting in 1928. Cole played piano from the age of four—his first tune was "Yes, We Have No Bananas"—and he regularly played piano at church as a child (his father was a Baptist pastor). Hines's rattling, devil-may-care style was Cole's first jazz influence. Hines's freedom with his left hand impressed Cole, as did his single-note runs, climactic tremolos, and technique of doubling the melody line of his solos in octaves. "It was his driving force that

appealed to me," Cole told John Tynan, adding, "He broke that barrier, the barrier of what we called 'stride piano,' where the left hand kept up a steady striding pattern." Cole would render Hines's devices with his characteristic pearly touch—he made the piano sound like bells—and in his own restrained style.

In 1936 Cole left for Los Angeles with his first wife, the dancer Nadine Robinson, playing piano with the band in a revival of Eubie Blake's and Noble Sissle's show, *Shuffle Along*. When the show failed, Cole stuck it out in Hollywood, performing in obscure nightclubs. The King Cole trio started almost by chance. Cole was hired to play at a Hollywood club called the Swanee Inn. He had met Oscar Moore, a guitarist, and Wesley Prince, a bassist, around town, and he hired them to join a group that he called Nat Cole and His Swingsters. Surprisingly, it had no drummer—Cole may have expected a drummer who didn't show up. As a publicity device, the club owner bought his pianist a paper crown and started calling him King Cole. The crown soon disappeared but the stage name stuck.

Prince was shortly replaced by Johnny Miller, another bassist, and the group, cool in conception and practiced in technique, became one of the most supple small bands in jazz. They could play hot, as they did on the pell-mell tune "Jumpin' at Capitol," but more typically Cole and Moore played a lithe kind of chamber music, trading solos, doubling each other's lines, and finishing each other's half-stated thoughts, as they did on Edward MacDowell's "To a Wild Rose." The techniques of the pianist and guitarist meshed perfectly, and yet each provided a delectable contrast to the other. Oscar Moore favored an occasional bent note, or would introduce a woozy, Hawaiian-sounding slide into his single-note lines. Cole's sculpted solos featured the smoothly articulated lines he adapted from Teddy Wilson, and passages of block chords. Cole liked to introduce harmonies that sounded jarring by the standards of the late thirties and early forties. He put his most startling harmonic ventures in his highly patterned solos, as in his famous 1944 "Body and Soul."

The trio shared with other small bands in the Los Angeles area its repertoire of jivey songs and carefully arranged three-minute jazz tunes and

ballads. But its musical sophistication, the suave manner of its leader, and the startling harmonies under the unruffled surface of its music suggested something new. The Cole trio was one of the first cool jazz bands, and if Cole himself hadn't tired of the format of its music, he might have written increasingly complex arrangements in the same manner as the later Modern Jazz Quartet recorded.

Cole strongly influenced the next generation of pianists; Tommy Flanagan and Hank Jones, for example, have spoken to me of his impact on them. Cole wanted something more, though, than the obscure and financially hazardous life of a jazz musician. He always sat catercorner to the piano, smiling ingratiatingly at his audiences and looking as if he were about to spring away from the keyboard. When—urged by his wife and agent, and prompted by his own ambition to become a national figure—he left the piano bench for a stand-up microphone, no one should have been surprised.

The trio's early recorded repertoire was full of hip ditties, and typically the three men sang the vocals together. Though the group was locally famous and broadcast regularly, not until 1944 did it register its first national hit, "Straighten Up and Fly Right," which was based on a sermon by Cole's father about a monkey who hitches a ride on a buzzard's back. Cole tells the story in near-speaking tones, his trio members chant the title, and there is a thirty-two-bar chorus of beautiful solos by Cole and Moore.

That the trio's first hit was a pop vocal was not lost on Cole, who had been working at his singing. Comfortable from the beginning with the clipped vocals of jive, he began trying romance. The first disc of the Mosaic set includes two takes of the 1943 "Embraceable You"; in each case, after a graceful introduction Cole sings the first chorus, holding the last note of each phrase in what seems like a willed effort to sing legato. Soon he mastered that lesson.

Cole did not seem eager to abandon the trio to be a singer or a pianist, although he did play with other musicians. By 1943 he was at the height of his powers as a jazz player, and the jazz world recognized him: Lionel Hampton hired the trio for a recording session as early as 1940, and in 1942 Cole played a masterly session with Lester

Coming Next Month In

The Atlantic



A RADICAL PLAN TO CHANGE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

by Michael Lind

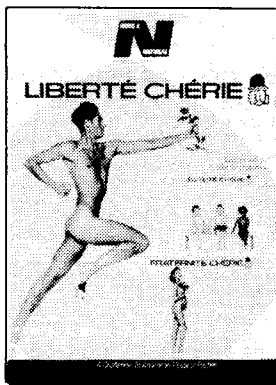
Proposals for systemic reform of the federal government are not new. Making Congress more like the British Parliament, broadening presidential powers, and instituting term limitation for elected officials—"the panacea of the moment"—are familiar solutions offered by an angry and disillusioned electorate. But they are all bad ideas, the author writes; if they achieved any results at all, it would be at the expense of democracy. He offers a new plan.



A GOOD PUBLIC BUILDING

by Witold Rybczynski

"If this sober and rugged building looks old-fashioned," the author writes, "it is because its designers are concerned with old-fashioned architectural virtues: civility, clarity, utility, and beauty." The building is the new Harold Washington Library Center, in Chicago, which made the author feel not like a consumer or an onlooker but "like a citizen."



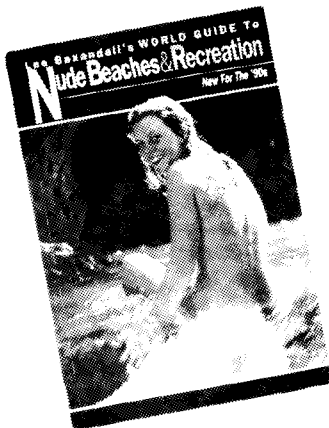
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Young. But mostly Cole stuck to his trio, expanding its repertoire and refining its techniques. On January 17, 1944, the trio recorded an almost perfect session for Capitol. It produced four lovely instrumentals, including two classic slow ballads, "The Man I Love" and "Body and Soul." Cole's theme statement of the first sections of "The Man I Love" could not be clearer in conception or more lyrical. Moore backs him superbly and takes the bridge; when Cole returns to finish the chorus, he plays block chords in a rhythmically enlivened style. The rest of the piece, with solos by Moore and Cole, maintains the same level of intelligent discourse and depth. "Body and Soul" is even better. Moore opens with a full chorus, ending the bridge in a series of sighing notes that bend gracefully like willows.

Cole, Moore, and Miller produced other masterpieces, including a series of blues that included "Cole Slaw," "Easy Listening Blues," and the celebrated "Blues in My Shower." Augmented by a drummer and a string section, the group in 1946 recorded their enduring version of Mel Tormé's "The Christmas Song," which may have been the crucial record of Cole's career. By 1946 he realized that he was the star of the Cole trio. His new wife, the ambitious Maria Cole, pushed him to assert himself. In 1947 he abruptly halved the salaries of Moore and Miller. Moore left and was replaced by another fine guitarist, Irving Ashby. The trio survived, but its dynamics shifted as Cole became more absorbed in his singing and less likely to jam with what were no longer his partners but now his employees.

COLE'S PRIVATE life was not untroubled. When, in 1948, he moved into an exclusive segregated neighborhood of Los Angeles called Hancock Park, neighbors protested. According to Leslie Gourse, the lawyer representing the property owners told Cole that they didn't want "any undesirable people coming into the neighborhood." Cole is said to have replied, "Neither do I. If I see anybody undesirable coming in, I'll be the first to complain." Cole broke many racial barriers, by staying at first-class hotels, some of which he had to sue first, and by performing at previously segregated venues, including Las Vegas clubs. In 1956 he made the newspapers by sign-

ing a three-year contract with the Sands. For three weeks of work a year he would be paid \$500,000.

Cole was a star, but it was clear in the fifties that he had hit what we would now call a glass ceiling, because of his race. In 1956 he started his television show, which ran first at fifteen and then at thirty minutes. Despite good ratings he could not find a permanent sponsor. He had small parts in a series of movies but never a featured role, except in the 1955 *The Nat King Cole Story*. (Many people remember him as one of two strolling minstrels in *Cat Ballou*; the other was the comedian Stubby Kaye.) In 1960 Cole put together a stage show called *I'm With You*, but it closed after devastating reviews. After the smash success of his song "Ramblin' Rose," in 1962, Cole tried another revue, *Sights and Sounds: The Merry World of Nat King Cole*. Both shows featured interracial casts and at least implied the idea of interracial romance.

Cole's last million-seller record, *Those Crazy Lazy Hazy Days of Summer*, was issued in 1963. The next year, soon after a performance at Lyndon Johnson's White House, Cole, a lifetime chain smoker, discovered that he had lung cancer. He died at dawn on February 15, 1965. *Variety* noted in an obituary that Cole had sold close to nine million albums, which had grossed over \$50 million for Capitol Records.

An ambitious, perhaps even driven man, he was at the same time gracious. He had stopped playing jazz exclusively, he said in 1951, in order to broaden his audience. He wasn't apologetic. He knew what he was doing, and believed that he was flying right: "I may be doing jazz a lot more good than some of these real hip, cool people who put everybody down," he told *Down Beat*. "I play and sing for a lot of folks you could label square. But they trust me—you know what I mean. They have confidence in what we're doing so we can sneak in some jazz and they like it because it isn't being forced down their throats." Three years later, again in *Down Beat*, he added, "Of course, some people say I've gone so-called commercial, but I challenge them to say I'm corny." Perhaps he stepped over that boundary with "Ramblin' Rose," but most of Cole's recordings were as sweetly elegant, as unpretentiously challenging, as the man himself. His best jazz playing was thrilling. □

Books

A Ten-Thousand-Letter Love

by Anthony Burgess

VITA AND HAROLD:
The Letters of Vita Sackville-West
and Harold Nicolson
edited by Nigel Nicolson.
Putnam's, \$29.95.

VITA (or Victoria) Sackville-West was a member of one of the ancient governing families of England, with its seat at Knole, in Kent. She was a writer of fiction and biography and, on the strength of her volume *The Land*, was considered something of a poet. This work was intended to be the English equivalent of Virgil's *Georgics*, with its exhortation to an industrial nation to get back to its agricultural and horticultural roots. It seems to many readers now to be an embarrassingly old-fashioned effusion. Vita was, however, a great gardener, the writer of a regular gardening column in the London *Observer*, and the creator of one of the finest gardens in England, now in the hands of the National Trust, at Sissinghurst Castle (Vita and Harold's residence from 1932). Profoundly conservative, even snobbish, she nevertheless became one of the matron saints of contemporary lesbianism. Her affair with Violet Trefusis was tempestuous, indiscreet, disastrous for one husband and very nearly so for the other. She made a dive for the wife of the South African poet Roy Campbell, with the result that Campbell attacked her and Harold in a poem and a volume of reminiscences. But her most lasting affair was conducted with Virginia Woolf, who wrote her a prolonged love letter in the form of the novel *Orlando*, in which Vita strides between one sex and the other and over several centuries of English history.

Harold Nicolson was the son of Lord Carnock, the scion of a newer aristocracy than Vita's. Educated as a gentleman,

he entered the diplomatic service, later became a member of Parliament, and earned fame and a knighthood as the biographer of King George V. He was, like Vita, soaked in literature and the visual arts; to both, however, music meant nothing: the tin ear of the English aristocracy is legendary. Harold was not quite a modernist, but he had a knowledge of the currents of contemporary literature that, as I remember, he transmitted over the BBC lucidly and humorously. He wrote one prophetic novel, *Public Faces*, which was rich in inner knowledge of the workings of government and, well before the Second World War, predicted the atomic bomb. He was a fine biographer and belle-lettrist, but his taste was limited by his class and the period of his upbringing. Vita wrote a novel called *The Edwardians*. Both she and Harold were Edwardians. Harold, like Vita, was a homosexual—but a highly discreet one. Public life enjoined care in the conduct of his liaisons. Vita had no such responsibility.

These two married and stayed married. They produced two sons, one of whom has edited this volume, but their relationship thereafter was not cemented by the pleasures and duties of the marital couch. They went their own sexual ways; what was left over from sex was a love that may be termed pla-

tonic. There is something to be said for such a marriage. Bernard Shaw, it will be remembered, had a marriage totally *blanc*, but it did not impair either his health or his longevity. A love without pawing and hot breathing, conceivably without kisses, satisfied the Nicolsens on a level incomprehensible to the Elizabeth Taylors of the world. The love letters collected here, a selection from more than ten thousand that have survived, use, sometimes excessively, the language of passion, but mostly the tone is one of quiet delight that both have a haven to steer to after excursions that have proved stormy, and not only on the sea of sex. The letters, especially Harold's, cover a period of English history that contained two wars and a painful interim, to say nothing of an agonizing aftermath that is still going on. Harold was in the middle of things, from Versailles to Nuremberg; Vita was mostly at an unchanging center of digging and planting. His letters are, on the ground of their subject matter, the more interesting. He was, moreover, the better letter writer.

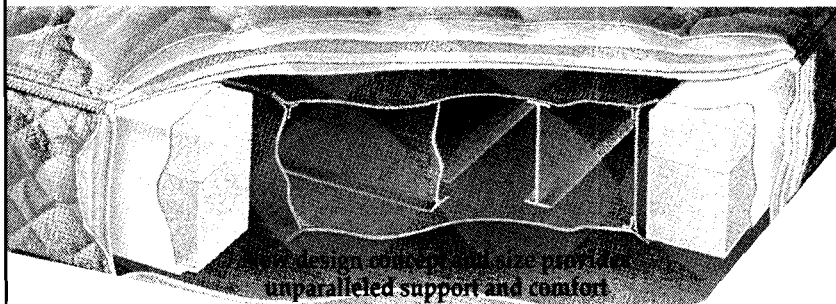
THE MILIEU they inhabited brought them into close contact with the leaders of society—British, French, American, even Iranian. From Harold we learn about Lord



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Curzon and Winston Churchill, De Gaulle, the elder Shah, the Windsors, Charles and Anne Lindbergh. From Vita we learn of the eccentricities of the Bloomsbury group. The literary figures who feature in their conjoined worlds are rarely on the highest level—Somerset Maugham, Cyril Connolly, Sinclair Lewis—but one letter from Harold concerns his meeting with James Joyce in the rue Gallilée in February of 1934. Here the Nicolson descriptive talent is disclosed at its best:

He told me that a man had taken Oolissays [*Ulysses*] to the Vatican and had hid it in the shape of a prayer book—and that it had been blessed in such disguise by the Pope. He was half-amused by this and half-impressed. He saw that I would think it funny, and at the same time he did not think it wholly funny himself. It was almost as if he had told me the story in the belief that it might help to lift the ban [on the novel] in England. And yet, being uncertain about it, he smiled deprecatingly as he told it, whereas his eyes behind his glasses were almost appealing.

I suppose that if I had been lunching with him at a restaurant, I should not have felt so strange. But the impression of the Rue Gallilée was the impression of a very nervous and refined animal—a gazelle in a drawing-room. His blindness increases that impression. His shy courtesy, his neatness, his twitching fingers with the rings. I suppose he is a real person somewhere—but I feel I have never spent half an hour with anyone and been left with an impression of such brittle and vulnerable strangeness.

Nicolson's admiration for Joyce was a facet of an avant-gardism very rare in the diplomatic corps. It went along with a deep suspicion of anyone who could not recognize a Cézanne at a glance. In 1940 I, as a very young modernist, submitted for a literary prize a short story that went far in experimentalism. Nicolson, as judge, unhesitatingly gave it the award, and this initiated what I may term my literary career. The modernist sympathy did not endure. Harold and Vita joined in anathema of Nabokov's *Lolita* on grounds of its capacity to corrupt. Strictly, with their sexual inversions, they had no right to be censorious. But arteries were hardening and ancestral conservatism was showing the bones of the family face.

The conservatism of Vita never really faltered, since she was never in the trimming situation of a man whose life lay in public affairs. Harold, naturally Tory, became involved in Oswald Mosley's New Party, not foreseeing that it was to turn into the British Union of Fascists; later he joined the Socialists, believing that there was no future in laissez-faire. Vita was blimpish. When, during the Second World War, the Nazis dribbled bombs on Kent, she rained curses on all the Germans and wished to see every town in Germany leveled. Harold, even at the Nuremberg trials, had a certain tenderness for the high Nazis who were being humiliated on their way to the hangman. He was a tender man, while Vita was a fire. Neither of them had much direct knowledge of the lower orders. Their life was like a Hollywood film of the 1930s in which comic servants and cheery Cockneys stand for a real world hidden under a dream world of silver salvers and riding to hounds. Vita excoriated the welfare state, in which proletarian layabouts collected handouts and did no work. The war of 1939-1945, to both, was waged by the Germans against the English upper classes, with the common sort doing their immemorial duty of protecting the established order. They loathed substandard speech. A prospective secretary would be made to recite "How now brown cow" and accepted or rejected on the quality of her diphthongs. Were the established order to be bombed and the Nazis to invade, Harold and Vita had ready what they termed their "bare bodkin"—the equivalent of the SS cyanide capsule. Neither was as brave as the other thought he or she was.

If you want epistolary lyricism, here is Vita giving it on June 3, 1940:

Last night was one of the most beautiful nights I ever remember. I was out late by myself getting some of Beale's sheep back into the field from which they had escaped. One lamb got *égaré* into another field and I pursued it through the long wet grass, led by its bleatings and the faint glimmer of its little body. The rim of the sky was still pink with sunset, Venus hung alone and enormous, and the silhouette of the sentry appeared above the parapet of the tower.

The region was being guarded from the lookout post at Sissinghurst. A let-

ter from Harold in London the following day warned of a coming invasion of this pastoral Eden:

I force myself to see things at their worst. I do not really believe in my soul that the Germans will make a successful invasion of this country, but I do think they may bring off a smash and grab at several points. But I force myself to foresee what will happen if they land at Hastings and Faversham and make a pincer movement to cut off our forces in Kent. This will mean that there will be fighting at Ashford. It means that you will be in danger. Now that thought makes my heart stand still with a sick pause. But then it beats again. You are a brave person and you have a sense of responsibility. It would not be you to run away and leave your people behind. If you are told to do it, then you must go. But I see, and you see, that you must stick it out if you are allowed to. And finally there is the bare bodkin. That is a real comfort.

This letter betrays an attitude peculiar to the ruling class during that gorgeous but perilous summer. They honestly believed that the Nazis were coming to get them. We of the lower orders, who had to do the defending, never felt we were worth the Nazis' attention. Nor did we ever believe they would come. Upper-class timorousness was the other side of the coin of upper-class privilege. Still, Nicolson took time off from his apprehension to award me that literary prize.

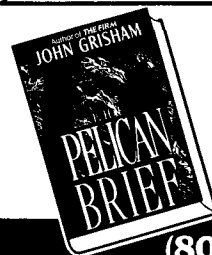
Having tried to disinfect himself "from the slime of *Lolita*," Harold indulged in a *Te Deum*, or a *Te Vita* (after all, *Vita* means "life"), on September 8, 1959, saying,

You and I can at least feel that we have got the most out of such talents as God gave us. But I believe what I appreciate most about my gifts is the gift of seeing beauty. Why should I experience such a spurt of pleasure at seeing the tower of Staplehurst church catch the sun through the fog? And why should that pleasure be doubled if you are there to share it? Oh bless you my saint for giving me such a happy life.

That is touching. Qualifications are left to the secondary readers (ourselves), who have little to bless Vita for and much to reproach her with. For instance, she must have known the danger of engaging in lesbian love with

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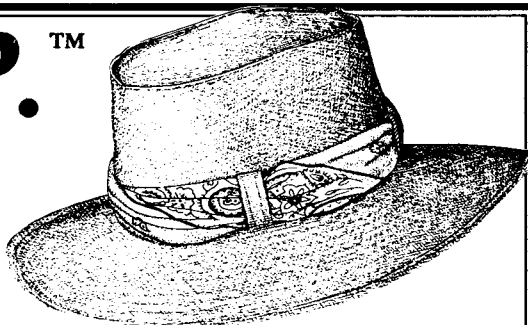
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Mrs. Woolf, who was never far from dementia and found her own bare bodkin in 1941 in a river. She is not, to us underlings, a fine democratic role model; that she should be a great gardener is attributable to a code of leisure that few may now take for granted. Harold, on the other hand, worked hard, wrote well, displayed love and loyalty, and, when Vita died, died of a kind of spiritual inanition. To American readers, this collection must have the quality of a museum. Ancient presumptions and prejudices are fossilized, and a way of privileged life shown in medallions. Love comes through, however, and as a testament of love superficially bizarre but fundamentally exemplary, this volume stands as a monument. □

The Cardinal of Repression

by James Carroll

MILITANT AND TRIUMPHANT:
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1859-1944

by James M. O'Toole.

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AMERICAN Catholics have known what it is to be attacked by the narrow-minded and prejudiced among their fellow countrymen, but the full possibilities of American Catholic contributions to the life of the universal Church have also been under sporadic attack—from Rome itself. For more than a century Catholics who have valued the "American" virtues of democracy and pluralism, and have waited for the Church to become more tolerant of differences, more fully catholic, have been in turn rejected and accepted by those in Church authority. Lately, after the momentous acceptance of American Catholicism under Pope John XXIII and Vatican Council II, in the early 1960s, the cycle has turned again. Repeating a tragic mistake, Roman Catholicism is doing its best to repudiate one of the Church's most promising traditions.

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nation of “artificial birth control” in his 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, most observers outside the Church and many inside, especially liberals, thought his reaffirmation was a historic mistake. Today, in Europe and North America, as the Pope’s critics predicted would be the case, the prohibition is ignored: polls and birth rates show that Catholic use of contraception is no different from non-Catholic use. In the developing countries of, say, Latin America, where the Church is strong, soaring populations almost certainly have more to do with economic and other cultural factors than with simple acquiescence to papal authority. Yet though it has harmed the Roman Church, *Humanae Vitae* may have saved Roman Catholicism, by undercutting one of the most misguided propositions the Church ever promulgated as a central tenet of the faith: the doctrine of papal infallibility.

Strictly speaking, *Humanae Vitae* was not issued as an infallible papal statement, but it was imposed on Catholics with the full weight of papal authority. It has been vigorously defended by bishops, some of whom defrocked priests who refused to teach it. The present Pope has made it clear that he regards *Humanae Vitae* as absolutely binding. In rejecting the teaching on birth control, Catholics have rejected the unquestioned authority of the papacy and have, simultaneously, drastically weakened whatever claim the doctrine of papal infallibility had on the Catholic conscience.

Even at the height of the papacy’s temporal power, when medieval and Renaissance popes deposed emperors, appointed kings, and divided the world among competing colonizers; even during the Reformation, when popes fought Protestants to the death and excommunicated half of Europe, the universal Church’s ancient claim to “inerrancy” in its mission of handing on the Gospel was not formally restricted to the person of the Bishop of Rome. The claim that the Pope, teaching *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals, was exempt from the capacity for error was not solemnly made until 1870—as an act of the fathers gathered at the First Vatican Council. They were moved to make this extraordinary proclamation as a kind of compensation for losing the last remaining temporal holdings of the papacy to King Victor Emmanuel II, in the same period. The



Papal States had once stretched from coast to coast across Italy, but from then on the Pope’s worldly sway was to extend only to the hundred-odd acres of Vatican City. The fathers of the council saw to it that the spiritual sovereignty of Peter’s successor would be as absolute as possible—far more absolute than Peter’s authority had ever been.

The story of the Catholic Church from 1870 through the first half of the twentieth century, ending with Vatican II and *Humanae Vitae*, is the story of an efficient, ever extending spiritual imperialism under the banner of papal infallibility. That proposition has politicized—and parochialized—the New Testament notion of the Holy Spirit’s enduring presence in the Church. Future generations of Catholics will surely seek to explain away this astounding doctrine with ever more arcane redefinitions, much as this generation explains away the once solemn doctrine of no salvation outside the Church. The key to the papacy’s success in solidifying its hold over the soul of the Church was not the virtue of the men who held the office or the clarity of their moral vision but a far simpler thing: the Pope’s expanded authority to appoint bishops without regard for the preferences of local churches. The Pope controls dioceses and archdioceses around the

world by making sure they are administered by men whose first loyalty is to him. Nothing demonstrates the significance of this power better than the career of Boston’s flamboyant Cardinal Archbishop William Henry O’Connell.

AT THE TURN of the century the incubator for *Romanità*, the extension of papal control to the United States, was the North American College in Rome, and its rector was a forty-one-year-old priest from Lowell, Massachusetts, named William Henry O’Connell. It is no coincidence that not long after Leo XIII condemned the heresy of “Americanism,” in 1899, he made O’Connell a bishop and sent him back to the United States as the head of the diocese of Portland, Maine. Promoted to Boston in 1906, O’Connell was to be the Pope’s leading agent against a New World movement that threatened to infect Catholicism with the dangerous—and “Protestant”—ideas of pluralism, religious liberty, separation of Church and State, and democracy. Americanism was associated with the ideas of Isaac Hecker, a convert to Catholicism and the founder of the Paulist Fathers. Hecker had been a member of the Transcendentalist commune at Brook Farm and an intimate of Henry David Thoreau and Orestes Brownson. Hecker’s argument that the American experiment could revitalize a moribund European Catholicism stood on a central theological pillar: the notion that the Holy Spirit acts through the entire people of God, and not just through the hierarchy. That idea, of course, would ultimately be affirmed by Vatican II, but in 1899 it was condemned as heresy.

Despite Vatican II, the present Pope, John Paul II, seems as suspicious of Americanist ideas as any of his predecessors. The current, obvious division of the Catholic Church between forces of the hierarchy that value conformity and control, centralized in Rome, and those that regard differences, whether of national identity, political program, or theological nuance, as enriching and inevitable aspects of true catholicity is illuminated in James M. O’Toole’s new biography, which tells O’Connell’s story with dispassionate judiciousness, but also with a sharp eye on the story’s significance for the disheartening detour that the Catholic Church has taken in this century.

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What are the facts?

■ Israel was created for a specific purpose. It is the ingathering of Jews from all over the world, especially those who had been subject for centuries to hostility, violence, oppression, ghettoization, and — eventually, the unprecedented disaster of the Holocaust, in which 6 million Jews perished. The yearning for the re-establishment of the Jewish homeland in what came to be called "Palestine" had been unremitting over the centuries. In 1917, the British were in control of Palestine and issued the Balfour Declaration, which called for the establishment of "...a national home for the Jewish people". This Declaration was confirmed by the League of Nations. The concept of Palestine as a Jewish state was further confirmed by the United Nations, which recognized the new-born Jewish state in 1948.

■ During the second World War, many of the millions of Jews that died in the gas chambers of the Nazis could have been saved if they had been allowed into Palestine. The British, however, under the unrelenting threats of the Arabs, buckled under that pressure and effectively throttled Jewish emigration to Israel, thus condemning many to horrible deaths. The situation today is comparable: Under "glasnost" the virulent history-old anti-Semitism of the Russians and the new-found hatreds in the Islamic parts of the former Soviet Union subject the Jewish population to imminent great danger and possible pogroms. Emigration to Israel is the only solution.

■ The Arab world has regarded this exodus with undisguised hostility and has urged the former Soviet Union to stop emigration to

Israel altogether. Pretext for this hostility and opposition is the alleged fear that the Soviet-Jewish immigrants will settle in the administered territories, thus threatening the Palestinian inhabitants and their hopes for a future homeland. But, this is a false charge. The Israeli government gives absolutely no incentives to any of the immigrants to move to those areas. Fewer than 1% of all Soviet-Jewish immigrants have moved into the territories.

■ The concern of the Arab states, virtually all of which (with the notable exception of Egypt) consider themselves in a state of war with Israel and which have the destruction of Israel at the very top of their agendas, is not with the "Palestinians". In fact, the "Palestinians" and their aspiration for a homeland are a matter of some indifference to the Arab nations, a pretext for the enmity to Israel. If they were truly concerned about the "Palestinians" and their well-being, they would not have suffered their staying in refugee camps for over forty years, in conditions of utter misery. The real reason is the basic Arab view that the existence of Israel on any land that they think of as "sacred Arab soil" is considered a Western plot against Islam and the Arab world and that the destruction of Israel is a sacred religious duty, which calls for "jihad" (holy war) against the "infidels". Even if Israel could be induced to grant the "Palestinians" their mini-state, it would not change the hostility of the Arab nations one iota. Their aim would still be the destruction of Israel, except that, with a Palestinian state in Israel's heartland, the Arab armies would only be minutes away from Jerusalem, from Tel Aviv, and from the military, industrial, and population centers of the country.

The mass immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel would strengthen Israel. Anything that strengthens Israel is perceived by the Arabs as weakening them and thus making more difficult the planned destruction and dismemberment of the Jewish state. The prospect of Jewish immigration strikes terror in Arab hearts. That explains the continuing acts of terror and the hysterical statements and saber rattlings of the Arabs. It explains Arab pressure on the former Soviet Union to halt this emigration. It explains why the former Soviet Union did until very recently not allow direct flights from and to Israel; it explains threats to blow up commercial aircraft of those countries bordering the former Soviet Union that may permit transshipment of Soviet Jews to Israel. Israel was created to be a refuge and homeland to persecuted Jews anywhere in the world. During World War II, the world stood idly by and did not allow Jews to enter Palestine, which could have saved millions. Nothing like it can be allowed to happen again. Soviet Jews are in imminent danger. They want to leave and go to Israel. Despite Arab frenzied opposition, the world must see to it that nothing happens to slow this exodus.

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ALTHOUGH HE was succeeded by the folk-hero archbishop, Richard Cardinal Cushing, O'Connell is still legendary in Boston. John F. Fitzgerald was mayor when O'Connell came down from Portland. Like Fitzgerald, and like Fitzgerald's successor as mayor, James Michael Curley, O'Connell would be, in O'Toole's phrase, "both agent and avatar" of the social, political, and economic arrival of Catholics in Boston, especially the Irish.

Archbishop O'Connell was a large, gaudy figure who aped Old World styles and tastes. He was a Roman prince, after all. When, in a sermon marking the centennial of the Boston diocese, he declared, "The Puritan has passed; the Catholic remains," he was implicitly enlisting the great Catholic geniuses of intellect and art, so many of them sponsored over the centuries by the papacy itself, in the battle against the austere, forever condescending Yankee Protestants of Boston and Massachusetts. His predecessor, Archbishop John J. Williams, had lived modestly in an anonymous room in a priests' rectory in the South End; O'Connell immediately took up residence in an ostentatious mansion in the Back Bay, a district in which the Irish had lived only under the eaves, as servants. Curley led the charge in those years, but O'Connell and the imperial religious spirit he embodied were a crucial part of the historic transformation of immigrant consciousness from self-doubt to self-assertion.

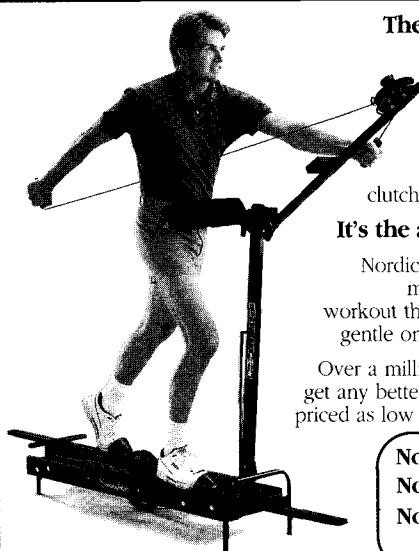
O'Toole compares O'Connell to Theodore Roosevelt, as well as to Fitzgerald and Curley, as a leader who instinctively understood the symbolic hero's role that his people needed him to play. His "advent to power coincided with the expansion of mass journalism. . . ." O'Connell cultivated celebrity in Boston and used it to advance his two-fold agenda: undercutting the power of the Yankee establishment, and expanding the power of the Vatican over American Church affairs. He developed a style that bishops in the United States continue to emulate—aggressive on public matters in which the Church has a clear stake (for example, abortion and public funding for parochial schools) and indifferent to matters that do not directly impinge on Church turf. (Judging by O'Toole's narrative, O'Connell had nothing of significance to say about women's suffrage, the First World War,

the Depression, or the virulent anti-Semitism of some Boston Irish Catholics.) Unlike most of the American bishops who preceded him, most of those who have come after O'Connell could take as their motto his statement "We turn Romeward as naturally . . . as the needle seeks the North."

If O'Connell was, in a way, the first Church celebrity in the United States, O'Toole's book is no mere celebrity biography. But in its most vividly written chapter it does, ironically, adopt the breathlessness of exposé that has so trivialized public discussion recently. O'Toole describes the scandalous behavior of O'Connell's closest associates, the priests who were the instruments of his fierce control over the Church, "Romanizers" all, who styled themselves "*Il Circolo*." Apparently they loved Rome not only for its spiritual meaning but also for *la dolce vita*. Unconsciously acting out the lurid stereotypes of priest-baiting anti-Catholics, they threw "raucous dinner parties" that, according to one observer, featured "enough liquors to sink a battleship," and, at least once, menu cards "so indecent" that the printer was shocked. In his absence, again at least once, the cardinal's favorite priests brought women to his Back Bay residence; rumor had it that the sanctity of the cardinal's own bed was violated. These priests were embezzlers and liars. At least two, including the cardinal's beloved nephew, the archdiocesan chancellor, were secretly married, leading double lives with wives and families in other cities. O'Toole portrays O'Connell as a secret coward who, if not one of these villains, was at their mercy for years. He even lied to the Pope's face to protect them—*Il Papa!*—because, O'Toole's narrative suggests, O'Connell was an active homosexual with secrets of his own to hide. Not even the scholarly O'Toole, a history professor at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, can avoid a seeming relish as he hoists the cardinal on his own sex-as-mortal-sin petard. (When John Cooney's *The American Pope* was published, in 1984, much was made of its report of rumors about the alleged homosexuality of Francis Cardinal Spellman—who as a young Boston priest had worked for O'Connell.)

The reduction in U.S. politics of the so-called character issue to matters of sexuality has been unfortunate precise-

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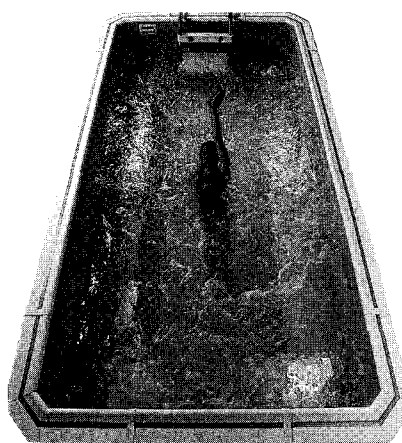
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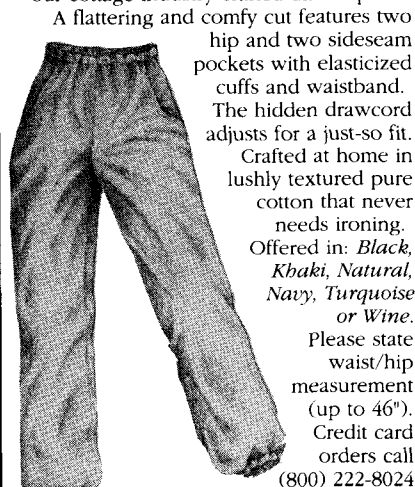


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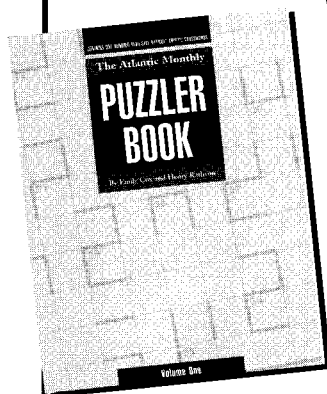
Answers to the June Puzzler

S	T	E	C ^W	E	D	C	B ^J	I	G	S	A	W
L ^T	E	N	O	R	S	A	L	L	E	Q ^G	E	A
E	R ^X	P	L	O	I	T	I	N	C	U	R	S
W	R	H	O	S	P	E	N	C	K ^H	A	N	T
B	I	O	N	I	C	R	T	P	O	W	S	E
J ^B	F ^O	R ^X	Y ^I	V ^N	Q ^G	P ^M	Z ^A	L ^T	W ^C	K ^H	U ^E	D ^S
E	Y	S	N	E	U	I	F	O	R	E	G	O
T	R	E	O ^F	O	I	L	S	T	I	D	A	M
S	U	M	M	O	V ^N	L	O	T	T	E	R	I ^Y
A	A	A ^Z	A	L	E	A	R	E	E ^U	B	E	N
M ^P	I	N	D	A	R	R	A	R	R	E	D ^S	T

"CODE PAIRS"

Across. 1. STE(W)ED 6. JIG-SAW 10. TENORS (homophone) 11. AL(LEG)E
12. EX(PLO)IT 13. IN-CURS 15. PEN-CHANT 16. B-IONIC 23. FOR-EGO 24. T(REF)OILS
26. SU(MMO)N (*Mom* anag.) 27. L-OTTERY 28. AZ(A)-LEA 29. REUBEN (anag.) 30. PIN-
DAR 31. (ARR)-EST Down. 1. SLEW (double def.) 2. TERR(IF)Y 3. COLON-Y 4. EROS-IVE
5. CATER-PILLAR 6. BLI(N)TZ 7. GECKO (odd letters) 8. SQUA(WK-E)D 9. WAST-ED
14. HORSEMAN (anag.) 17. P(L)OTTER 18. SUGARED (anag.) 19. JET-SAM 20. QUIVER
(double def.) 21. WRITER (homophone) 22. NO-MAD 25. MINT (double def.)

There are more!



You love to accept the challenge offered each month by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon in *The Puzzler*. Why should you have to wait until the next issue for more cryptic creations? *The Atlantic* is pleased to re-issue *The Atlantic Monthly Puzzler Book*, Volume I, first published in 1986. For those who can't wait another month, or missed them the first time around, this collection of 100 cryptics includes 98 from the first decade of *The Puzzler* and two constructed especially for this volume.

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ly because it exempts from moral analysis a leader's public record. The real moral crises of our time have far more to do with the wielding of power, economics, racial justice, and international relations than with sexuality.

But in fact on this score the Catholic Church is different. Sex *is* relevant as a public, ecclesiastical issue, in ways it may not be in secular society, and O'Toole's focus on sexual scandal is appropriate. One is tempted to argue, perhaps, that O'Connell should be judged on what his four decades as the Romanizing leader of the Catholic Church in Boston did to the *structures* of the Church in America. O'Connell may have enabled immigrants to feel vicariously that they had arrived, but he also legitimized and perpetuated some of the worst tendencies in the episcopate: the identification with wealth, an authoritarian disregard for dissent, an overly clericalized view of the Church, a marked condescension toward women. From the point of view of Catholics who continue to value democracy and pluralism, O'Connell was the first of many disasters, even if one focuses only on institutional issues.

But notorious facts of sexual deceit are to the point here, even if they confirm what Catholics always denounced as outrageous libels, because in the Catholic Church questions of sexuality are grossly manipulated for purposes of institutional power. O'Toole does not make this point directly, but his thorough documentation of sordid and secret decadence speaks volumes about what outwardly repressive regimes like O'Connell's really mean.

In the papacy's effort to extend its absolute control over the inner lives of Catholics, teachings on sexual morality (birth control, but also abortion, divorce, clerical celibacy, homosexuality, sex education in public schools, and the role of women generally) have been and continue to be its chief instrument. Even the establishment figures of the celibate clergy are human beings, no more exempt from the ambiguous, restless, and sometimes destructive energy of sexuality than any of the rest of us. But when they seek to control the lives of millions of men and women chiefly by *denying* that very ambiguity, then for once the sexual is essentially political and should be seen as such.

That there was a sexual lie at the heart of William Henry O'Connell's

achievement as an agent of the Pope's dominion over the American Church seems to carry a perverse justice with it, like the perverse justice according to which increasing numbers of Catholic priests are exposed today as sexual misfits. After all this time—122 years since the doctrine of papal infallibility was proclaimed; twenty-four years since Pope Paul VI condemned birth control, nearly three years since Pope John Paul II rejected the use of condoms even to prevent the spread of AIDS—it has become apparent to many people, including Catholics, that there is a sexual lie at the heart of official Church teaching. That deception has tragic consequences, both for the burdened men charged with maintaining it and for the

many who look to Church leaders for images of integrity and faith.

But the Church is more than its leaders. The increased willingness of Catholics to trust their own consciences, even in grave violation of official teaching, represents the long overdue beginning of a new era in the life of the Church, one that builds on earlier, unrealized impulses. Ironically, William Henry O'Connell, by helping two generations of American Catholics to overcome an immigrant legacy of self-doubt and to arm themselves against the assaults of anti-Catholic stereotypes, thereby sowed the seeds of this harvest. American Catholics, with the Church's help, reshaped America; "heretics" still, they are now reshaping the Church. □

Brief Reviews



TO THE LINKSLAND by Michael Bamberger. Viking, \$21.00. Mr. Bamberger is a sportswriter and a golfer. He is a good sportswriter and a normal golfer—that is, he is dissatisfied with his game. His notion for improving that game was to turn professional caddy on the European professional tour, working for Peter Teravainen, a Yale graduate who makes a living as a professional player without winning major tournaments or even appearing often on the leader board. The early pages of Mr. Bamberger's book describe tournaments in southern Europe, with much information on catch-as-catch-can transport and lodging arrangements as well as the requirements of caddying in unfamiliar territory. When the expedition reached Scotland, Mr. Bamberger took off on his own, searching for "the primal heart of golf, which has been subverted in the United States by hundred-dollar green fees and five-hour rounds and motorized carts and private-club snobbishness. . . ." It is at this point that the text takes off as well, becoming fine travel writing about people and weather and history and terrain as well as about hooks and slices. The author had the good fortune to get advice from John Stark, a Scottish golf author-

ity of impressive subtlety and shrewdness. He played the great courses—usually in the rain. He eventually found his dream course, the true soul and origin of the game, a topographic chaos equipped with stingy fairways, generous rough, cranky greens, and an infestation of sheep. Mr. Bamberger makes no attempt to convert the unbeliever. He has written about golf for an audience of golfers, and has done that superbly well.

FRONTIERS by Noël Mostert. Knopf, \$35.00. Mr. Mostert's history is subtitled "The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People," and it deserves that description for the expanse of time it covers, the bloody and complicated events it recounts, and the remarkable characters it presents. Mr. Mostert begins with the rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, proceeds to the settlement in South Africa of the Dutch East India Company, and examines in detail the confusions and hostilities that ensued after the British took control of the area. The Dutch East India Company treated native Africans abominably and tried to keep its colonists in a state close to peonage. Colonists therefore

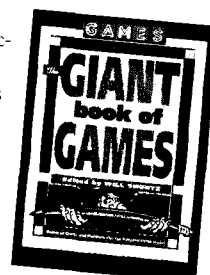
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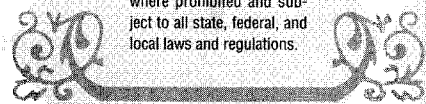
The first ten readers to send in a correctly solved "Relay Race" puzzle (see facing page) will win a copy of *The Atlantic Monthly Puzzler Book*. This trove includes 100 puzzles by the master cruciverbalists Cox and Rathvon from the first decade of *The Puzzler*, along with a pair of cryptics constructed especially for this collection.

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moved themselves and their cattle away from the Cape, oozing northeast until they encountered the Xhosa. The Xhosa, also a cattle-raising people, were numerous, brave, well organized in terms of their own society, and possessed of highly intelligent tribal leaders. There was trouble on the expanding frontier, and under British hegemony it grew worse, for the British imported colonists of their own under governors bent on securing peace while settling English farmers in Xhosa grazing lands. By the early nineteenth century southern Africa was a fierce mixture of rivalries and resentments, with Boers hating British, British despising Boers, both loathing missionaries, missionaries disapproving of colonists, Euro-Africans debating their status, and Xhosa trying to hang on to what they quite rightly considered their territory. London, meanwhile, sent out a series of officers left over from Wellington's campaigns, giving these governors conflicting instructions and inadequate funds, while missionary societies clamored for conversion and humane administration. In the inevitable wars the Xhosa showed more humane behavior than their European opponents—and, of course, they lost. Mr. Mostert, himself South African born, is able to amplify his grim history of theft and treachery with local detail and fine description of a landscape combining extravagant beauty with a climate of "malign caprice." He is also adroit in recreating characters, from the wild frontiersman who maintained his own small tribe of African wives and children to the inefficient and insubordinate English military commander whom no governor dared sack because of the man's noble, and still powerful, family. Mr. Mostert's basic intention is to impress upon readers the fact that modern South African society derives directly from old problems that have never been solved or even consistently addressed—a disheartening view that does not detract from the interest and readability of his excellent work.

WOMEN AND DOCTORS by John M. Smith. *Atlantic Monthly*, \$20.95. Dr. Smith, a fellow of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, after much experience in observing the mistakes of his colleagues (usually because he has been called upon to correct them), has come to believe that men

simply should not be gynecologists and obstetricians. In support of this heresy, he offers, from his own practice, horror stories of incompetence, irresponsibility, greed, and vulgar disrespect. He describes the kind of technical and mental training that male doctors receive before being turned loose on female patients. He also provides practical guides for detecting an untrustworthy doctor and information on the conditions that lead women to a gynecologist in the first place, noting that some of these conditions can be, and sometimes are, used to promote needless surgery. His denunciation may not correct the OB-GYN trade, but should encourage more women to enter it.

BOOMFELL by Douglas Hobbie. *Holt*, \$19.95. Boomfell is a middle-aged ex-academic who, finally realizing that his ambition to be a poet is misdirected, has become a real-estate salesman somewhere north of Boston. He is doing surprisingly well at it. His wife operates a housecleaning service that has been the family's chief support for some years. Despite a few past lapses into adultery, the Boomfells may be considered a well-behaved, reasonably contented couple—until Singer reappears. Singer is a former colleague who has hustled his way to academic success by obeying the proper rules, publishing the right papers, and kissing the right toes. He is now, however, enjoying a gaudy midlife crisis involving divorce, despair, and a recalcitrant mistress—all of which he explains to the Boomfells at garrulous, pitiful, grotesquely amusing length. Singer, along with the cheerfully irresponsible young lesbian who works for the housecleaning business, constitute temptation—snakes in the rather weed-grown Boomfell Garden of Eden. The question of how far these examples of self-indulgent emotionalism will inspire similar folly in the bourgeois Boomfells is what moves the novel's action ahead, while Mr. Hobbie's witty, irreverent use of language makes its progress a constant pleasure for the reader.

RUBBISH! *The Archaeology of Garbage* by William Rathje and Cullen Murphy. *HarperCollins*, \$23.00. This book grew out of an article in the December, 1989, *Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

RELAY RACE

This puzzle represents a six-team relay race. Each team, which consists of four 6-letter words, begins the race in its designated lane of the leftmost shaded column and ends somewhere in the rightmost shaded column, with its words overlapping their starts and finishes in the other three shaded columns. After the first leg a team *may* change to any other lane, but only on the second letter of a word (directly after a shaded column). Clues for each team are given together but out of order, leaving the solver to reconstruct the race with the help of answers to Down clues, which are normal. A team's placement in the race corresponds to the number of the lane in which it finishes. As a bonus, the shaded columns will show the names of four famous runners and, at the end, their common goal. Seven answers are capitalized, and 3a may be unfamiliar.

	A	B		C	D		E	F		G	H		
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 94.

RUNNERS

- 1a. Survey start of course in a Spanish-speaking country
- b. Giving track and field mostly inside
- c. African country has participant in trials after a gun goes off
- d. First-rate talker's lackluster time (*two words*)
- 2a. Record time held by group in combo
- b. Reformer's unhappy without starting blocks
- c. Muslim official holding finish list
- d. Weakness of Tanzania after the midpoint taking me aback
- 3a. O'Neill lost, getting something inlaid in metal
- b. Showy, neat sports—going after gold
- c. Vitamin C and iodine given to Nina after collapsing
- d. Go too far with dove flying around middle of torch at opening of Olympics
- 4a. Officiating winning leg, chewed gum
- b. In preliminary race, run hard in place to warm up
- c. Sponsored kid left out of gold, running around second
- d. Famous athlete from North America on course with numbers
- 5a. Phony tears spilled at the end
- b. During competition, let out bug
- c. Last two in Barcelona corrupted true character
- d. One wearing bronze, having dropped baton at first, changed focus (*two words*)
- 6a. Get angry about start of relay run
- b. Promotional tapes about one Olympic attendant

- c. Pussyfooted last half of race, within reason
- d. Spanish and German articles on last of events for seniors

DOWN

- A. In first place, nearly through, sprang through the air
- B. Drive is visible to audience
- C. Coming in relaxed, runner finally wiped out
- D. Olympic awards of food including bit of dessert
- E. Guys on a team rejected communist doctor?
- F. Racetrack great arrives with coach and oxygen
- G. Congratulatory touch in a film on bronze
- H. Bronze placed around odd fellow who ran in 1948

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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WORD HISTORIES

Etymologies derived from the files of the Dictionary of American Regional English

BY CRAIG M. CARVER



gimmick

Radio Finland's international broadcast includes five minutes of news read in Latin each week—an event that has attracted a certain amount of attention. “It's a *gimmick*, but a good *gimmick*,” admitted Juhani Niinisto, of the Finnish Broadcasting Company, to one reporter. Guesses at the origin of *gimmick* (an ingenious device or

idea) include a blend of *trick* and *gimbal* (a contrivance for permitting a body to incline freely) and *gimac*, an anagram for “magic,” referring to any device used by illusionists. But *gimmick* probably derives from *gibecrake*, a fourteenth-century word for an ornamental bit of inlaid wood. *Gibecrake* became *jimcrack* and then *gimcrack*, acquiring along the way the broader meaning of “a useless ornament or knickknack” (“Ribbins, and Looking-glasses, and Nut-crackers, and Fiddles, and Hobbyhorses, and many other *gim-cracks* . . . and all the other finnimbruns that make a compleat Country Fair”—Izaak Walton, *The Universal Angler*, 1676). Alternatively, *gimcrack* may be a compound of the dialectal *gim* (spruce, neat) and the Scots *crack* (a boastful lad), giving the early, now obsolete sense of “a showy, affected person” (“Lady, I pitie you . . . this [fellow] is a *Gimcrack*,/ That can get nothing but new fashions on you”—John Fletcher, *The Elder Brother*, about 1635), which evolved to the present-day meaning “a showy, trifling thing.” *Gimmick*, a final alteration, appeared in the United States in the early part of this century.

phony

In an effort to promote Canadian unity and stymie the separatist movement in Quebec, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney proposed last September to grant Quebec recognition as a “distinct” society. The separatists, however, would have none of it, prompting Mulroney to retort, “We are not going to be able to deal with the *phonies* who say they're interested in Canada but whose real objective is the destruction of the nation.” *Phony* or *phoney* (fake, counterfeit, false) is probably from the Irish *fáinne* (ring), which gave to English the slang word *fawney*. A *fawney* was used in a simple swindle known as a *fawney rig*, described in the 1796 edition of Francis Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*: “A common fraud thus practised:—a fellow drops a brass ring, double gilt, which he picks up before the party meant to be cheated, and to whom he disposes of it for less than its supposed, and ten times more than its real, value.” These confidence men were called *fawney droppers*. When *fawney* came to America, around the turn of the century, its meaning was extended to

“counterfeit” or “fake” and the word was soon altered to *phoney* (and later *phony*). In the 1920s it was reimported to England in its new form. But it was not until about 1940, when journalists began writing about the “*phoney war*”—the period of comparative Allied inactivity after the outbreak of the Second World War—that the word became widely known in the English-speaking world.



fogy

Last February members of the British Parliament demanded an apology from the Australian Prime Minister, Paul Keating, for what they saw as his rude behavior during Queen Elizabeth's visit to his Commonwealth nation. Keating not only had indirectly suggested that Australia abandon the monarchy and become a republic but also had put his arm around the monarch, violating protocol. When members of his own Parliament also began to criticize him, Keating called them “old *fogies* who doffed their lids and tugged the forelock to the British establish-

ment.” According to one source, *fogy* (an old-fashioned person) is from the Scots *fog* (moss, lichen) and its derivatives *foggie* and *fuggie* (“In wil-yart [lonely] glens he lik'd tae stray,/ By *fuggie* [mossy] rocks, or castle gray”—Robert Tan-

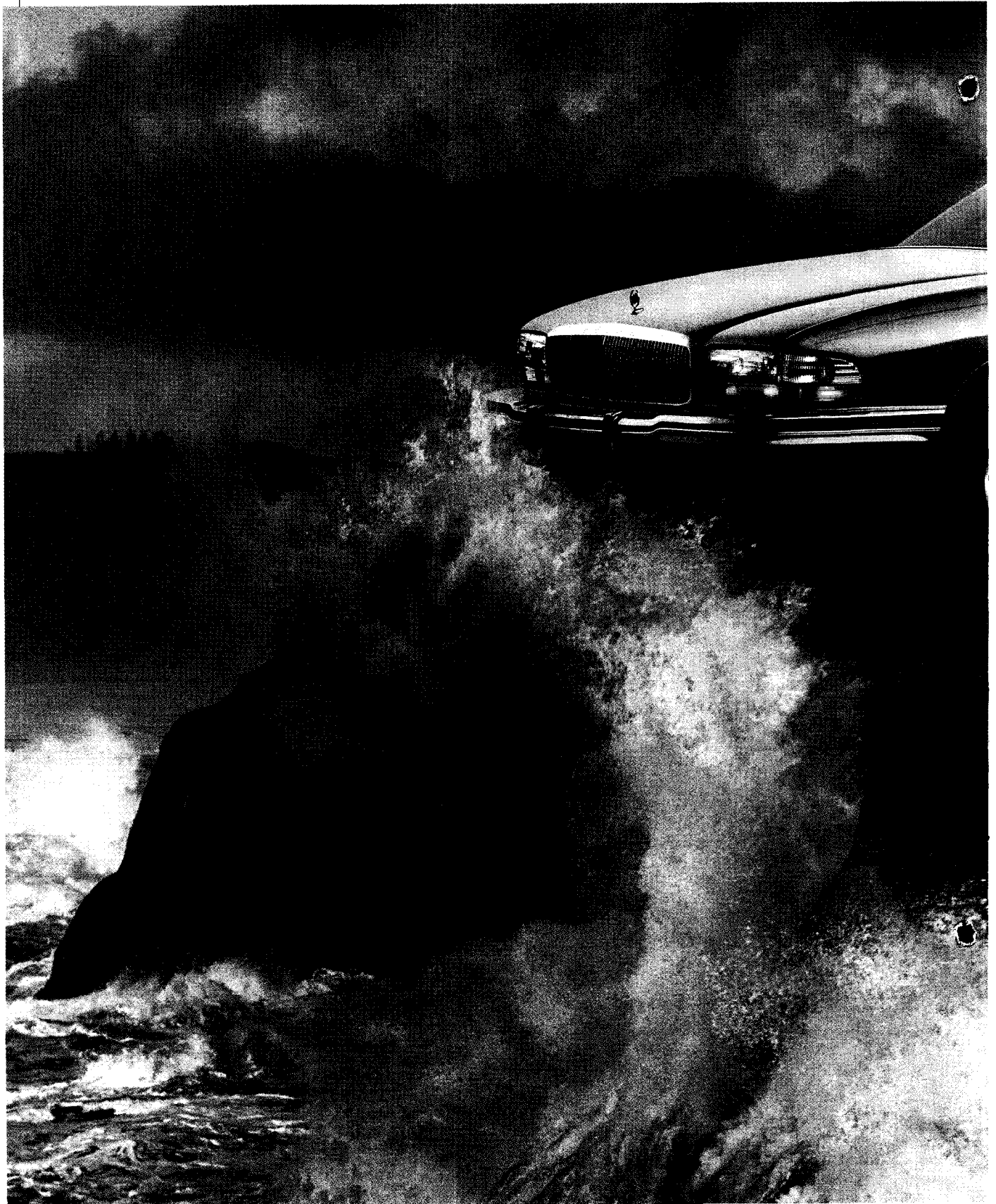
nahill, *Poems and Songs*, 1806). In the late eighteenth century army pensioners gathered once a year in Glasgow and fired a ceremonial round or two of blank cartridges. These veterans were called *foggies* (“Gem-mel was twenty years a soldier,

twenty a garrison *foggie*, and twenty a wandering mendicant”—James Paterson, *Contemporaries of Burns*, 1840), because they were figuratively moss-covered, or *foggie*, with age (in American English a “mossback” is a *fogy*). *Foggie* or *fogie* then came to refer more generally to any elderly person who is behind the times. Other authorities claim that *fogy* comes from *foggy*, meaning “murky,” a reference to the stereotyped mental condition of old people. French *fougueux* (hot-tempered, impetuous) has also been suggested as a source, since old people are supposed to be quick-tempered and crotchety.



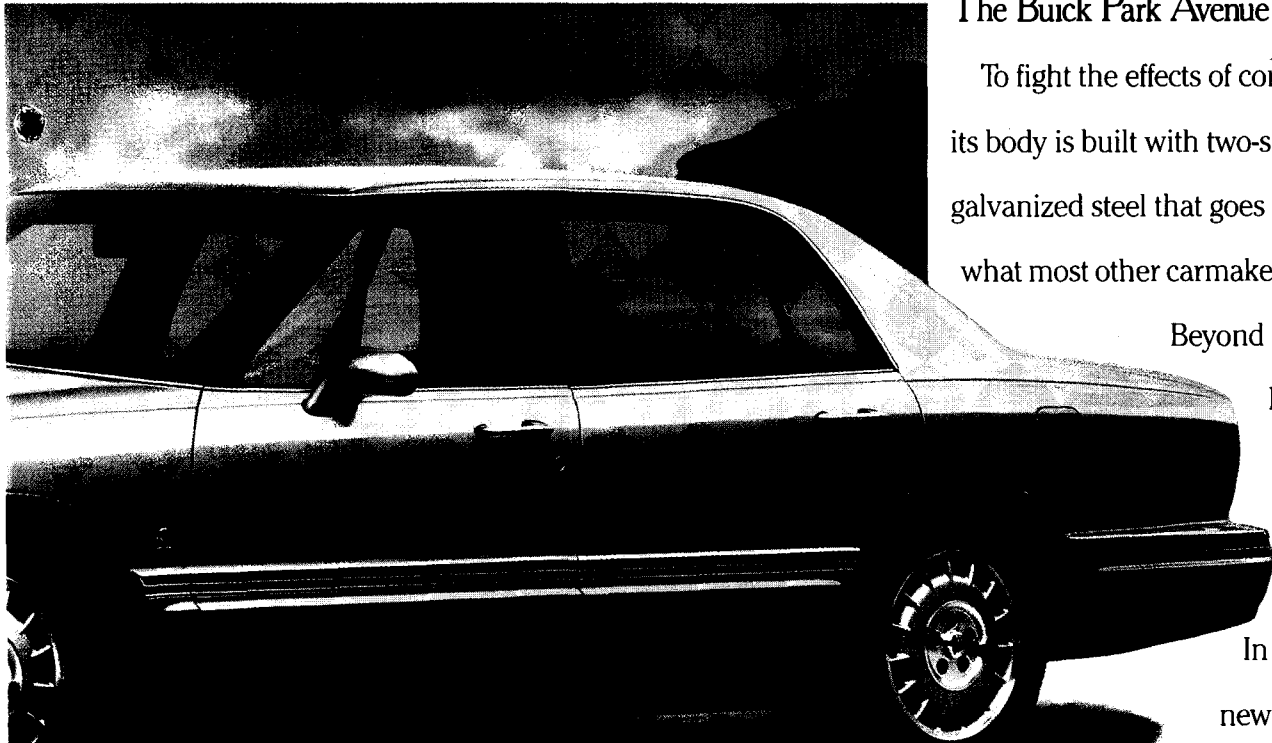


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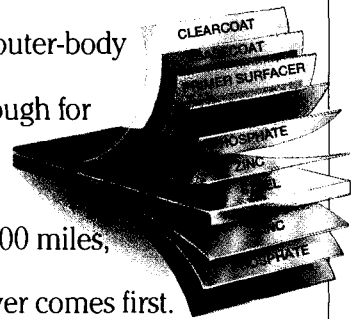
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